

TIME SCREEN

The Magazine of British Telefantasy

Number 19
Autumn 1992
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BRIAN CLEMENS
BOB PECK on
EDGE OF DARKNESS
Beyond **DOOMWATCH**
FREEWHEELERS
Win New TV Theme CDs

Compiled by Anthony McKay and Annette Buckley

Welcome to *MINDBENDER*, one of the few quizzes where a score of one out of twenty-seven isn't that bad. In fact this quiz is so tricky that if you can answer as few as twenty questions correctly, you may stand a good chance of winning. As always a video token for £11.00 will go to the person who can send in the most correct answers to the editorial address by the closing date. Due to the late publication of Issue 16 the closing date for the *MINDBENDER* in that issue has been extended as stated in the editorial. Thus the closing dates for the *MINDBENDER* in both Issue 18 and this issue will be November 30th.

Good luck.

1) In *TRUCKERS* who do the monks at The Store worship as their creator?

Which British telefantasy series featured the following episode titles: 2) *Amazonian Adventure* and 3) *Arctic Adventure*?

4) In *THE AVENGERS* who drove the car with the registration number JENK 999C?

Name the three guest stars that the following episodes have in common: 5) *U.F.O.: Destruction*, *THE AVENGERS: All Done With Mirrors* and *H. G. WELLS' INVISIBLE MAN: Behind The Mask*, 6) *THE NEW AVENGERS: Dead Men Are Dangerous*, *THE CHAMPIONS: Full Circle* and *THE AVENGERS: The Hidden Tiger* and 7) *SPACE:1999: Break-away*, *RANDALL AND HOPKIRK [DECEASED]: Never Trust A Ghost* and *DOCTOR WHO: The Krotons*



8) In which episode of which series did the above creature appear?

9) In *SAPPHIRE & STEEL* what do *Adventures One*, *Three* and *Six* have that the other three do not?



10) What was the name of the character played by the above actress in a first season episode of the same series?

11) *The Nuclear Family*, *Cricket* and *Easter 2016* are episodes of what?

12) Who was married to Netta but lasted after Miss Griffin?

In which *DOCTOR WHO* stories did an assistant 13) go blind temporarily, 14) have his legs paralysed temporarily and 15) get turned into a bird temporarily?

16) What was the name of Dave Lister's rock band?

Brian Blessed played the following parts in which series; 17) Yncanon, 18) Dr Rowland, 19) Brod and 20) Sgt Heurn

What do the following characters have in common 21) Jeff in *When Did You Start to Stop Seeing Things?* and Steed in *They Keep Killing Steed*, 22) Jean in *The House on Haunted Hill* and The Doctor in *The Snows of Terror* and 23) the fourth Doctor in *The Five Doctors* and Miss Peel in *K is For Kill*

24) What is the name of Simon Cashmere's time twin?

25) Which two actors have played CAPTAIN ZEP?

26) What comes before *Pen*, *Vacation* and *City Special* in the same series?

27) What is evil in *DOCTOR WHO*, magic in *CATWEAZLE* and plural in *THE NEW AVENGERS*?

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ENGAGE
MARKETING

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Editorial

TIME SCREEN
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Welcome to another exciting issue of *TIME SCREEN* in which you will find eye opening interviews with Bob Peck and Brian Clemens. We have also come upon a great coup; an outline for an unmade series by Kit Pedler and Gerry Davis intended as a follow up to *DOOMWATCH*. We are also pleased to publish the long-awaited conclusion of our *FREEWHEELERS* article, the first half of which appeared way back in Issue 15.

I have just come back from the annual Six of One convention in Portsmouth where I was amazed to find myself, of all people, winning a Fifteen to One quiz on *THE PRISONER*. As usual a great time was had by all despite the rain, and I'd like to say, "See you next year!" to all those who didn't buy any copies of the magazine off me this year.

Another event which I enjoyed over the last couple of months was the Kaleidoscope convention in Southbridge last August. This charity event featured screenings of rare ITV archive material including a complete run of *CITY BENEATH THE SEA* and *PATHFINDERS IN SPACE* together with the first episode of *UNDERMIND*, an unsuccessful colour ITC pilot for *THE FOX*, one of Nigel Kneale's *BEASTS* episodes together with a whole host of goodies and some baddies from ABC, ATV and ITC. I would strongly recommend these fairly regular events to anyone interested in vintage television.

With the approach of 1993 it is sad to reflect that the only people who seem to be commemorating the thirtieth birthday of *DOCTOR WHO* are *THE FRAME* team with their 1993 *DOCTOR WHO CALENDAR*, which contains quite a number of imaginative pieces of artwork to illustrate each month. It is a pity that the Cheetah People didn't look that convincing on television. Also, from what we have seen so far, *DOCTOR WHO - THE SIXTIES* from the same people looks set to become a definitive work on that era of the show.

Before I finish, wasn't *MY DEAD DAD* utterly brilliant?

Stay Alert!


Anthony R. McKay

Thanks this issue to:

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TIME SCREEN Episode Guide format devised by Andrew Pixley

Edge of Darkness

BOB PECK Interviewed by PAUL CORNELL

The name of actor Bob Peck has become synonymous with the BBC series **EDGE OF DARKNESS** due to his outstanding performance as Ronald Craven. Unlike most actors in television Bob had a great deal of involvement with the series at an early stage and is able in this interview to shed light on many aspects of the production as well as discussing his personal views about the series.

How did Bob get the part of Ronald Craven in **EDGE OF DARKNESS** and how much input did he have in the character's development? "I'd been a theatre actor, I put myself out of work, so I was in the market at that time. I was very lucky that this particular project came up when it did. I was also lucky in that the director and the producer were fairly theatre oriented, in other words they knew my work. What the director was looking for was someone who wouldn't be identified with any other programme, and I happened to be of about the right age and had the kind of background that was suitable for the character.

"There was a short-list of about four or five different people. It was written for a particular actor that Troy Kennedy-Martin had written work for before. The director didn't want to use him, the

THE GREEN MAN

producer wanted someone else who was well established and associated with another series, and I was completely unknown to a television audience. I went in and saw them and at the stage I first got involved, the script was in a much different state to the one it ended up in. Once they decided to use me I was party to all the rewrites that went on for about six weeks. In fact out of six episodes, by the time we started shooting, we'd rewritten four. So when I actually came to start filming, it was shot in a series of locations rather than story order. I was very familiar with the material that we were using, and of course with the story as an entirety, because the character is so central, he's in virtually every shot."

It was originally intended that Craven should turn into a tree at the end of the series. It has been suggested that Bob refused to undergo this metamorphosis? "Well that's not quite true. I know it is reported that I vetoed that but I think that everybody who read that version had the same reaction as me, and couldn't see how such an eventuality related to what had gone before. But in fact I think it could well have worked, because there are sort of supernatural elements in the story which prepare the audience for that kind of imaginative leap. Also the groundwork for that particular idea was quite well laid. It's an idea that stems from Troy Kennedy-Martin's own experience, because the idea for a bereaved policeman in a relationship with his daughter springs from his own relationship with his own daughter. He has suffered a divorce and his relationship with his daughter was severed in a similar way, it felt like a bereavement to him. She used to write to him and she used to think of him and actually refer to him in her letters as a tree. They actually feature in the film during a scene in a psychiatric hospital in Yorkshire."

Analogies have been drawn between Craven and King Lear, a role that Bob has also played, was this intentional? "I don't think that there was any conscious relation to the specific play, **KING LEAR**. I think the similarity lies in the tragic content. The sort of tragic weight, and carrying the burden of a series like that is a bit like playing the title role in a Shakespeare tragedy through a season at Stratford, which I've done a couple of times. I didn't actually play King Lear, I understudied King Lear, but I did a version of Lear by Edward Bond, which is, if anything, slightly more horrific."

During much of the final episode Craven is seen to be suffering from radiation sickness. Was there much research into the effects of the sickness for the role? "They were researched. You have make-up assistants who try to make it as authentic as possible. It might have seemed slightly odd, but radiation sickness has a superficial effect to start with; you feel very nauseous and you feel as though you are going to die. Then apparently there's a period when you feel as though you are getting better, and that's when the character takes advantage of that and slips hospital. Then the body is sort of destroyed from inside, and your functions start malfunctioning. The way it affects people varies, but skin sores tend to be an outward sign, your hair falls out and that sort of thing. Your digestive system picks up."

One of the most tense scenes in the series is when Craven waits to confront the gunman who originally shot his daughter. "I have a rather better memory of that actually. I think that it was done in one night. I could be wrong about that, but I think it was. There was a long section where you're waiting for the intruder to appear at the window. Then we went on and did the section where he actually comes into the room and we have a verbal confrontation. Then there was the gun shot, which is a separate set up. They're usually quite tricky because you have to set up the camera angles and the actor has to react to having something at very close range shot into his forehead, which gives the impression of him being



Ronald Craven (Bob Peck) prepares to enter the Northmoor complex

shot. They can often take a lot of time, and then there was a completely different, separate set up for his body being catapulted across the room. Now that was a stuntman and he went on to do something like twenty-four takes, and all he had to do was jetison himself into a sofa and tip the sofa over. His difficulty was lying still at the end. But all the time I was waiting, you have to do that at night you see, and all these set-ups take hours, and slowly, or quickly, dawn was advancing on us. I knew I had this mental breakdown to come, and this stuntman took what seemed the whole night to get this fall done. I had to do that breakdown in just a couple of takes."

In that scene Bob's theatre-style acting comes to the fore as Craven reacts to the death of the gunman. "If I remember rightly I offered that reaction to the director and he bought it, and then the cameraman, Andy Duan, who I've worked with since and who must take an awful lot of credit for the series, did that with a hand-held camera, and I had to move or less indicate what I was going to do. He ended up standing, crouching over me with the camera, quite a difficult thing to achieve. But in retrospect, I think I'd have done it slightly differently. I think I would have included the dead man. It was a rather selfish reaction."

The opening sequences of the series leading up to the death of Emma are filmed entirely during a very rainy night. Could Bob tell us about filming these scenes? "We filmed in Yorkshire for five weeks, and I think a fortnight of that was spent doing night shoots. The opening sequence, the first five minutes must have taken a week of that and I was standing in a non-waterproof mac in BBC rain which is very wet. The rain has to be amplified in order to make it visible to the camera, so you get drenched. They turn the hoses on you and you just get absolutely drenched. That seemed to go on for ever."

Did Bob have any difficulty filming out of sequence. "When I think about it, maybe it ought to have been more difficult than it was, but I think I had a lot of stamina at that time because of my theatre acting. Theatre acting tends to be physical, and you have to do it every night, sometimes twice a day. So you get very physically fit and your stamina is good. I was well prepared for that kind of role in physical terms, but if you think about when an audience watches an episode, they're taken through fifty minutes of high drama, and they have to assimilate a whole, compressed sequence of emotions and events. When you're filming it, you have hour after hour to get into individual moments. So you have plenty of time to recall what's gone before. I had no difficulty learning any of it except for one speech, I had very little difficulty learning any of the dialogue because it's so well written, and so economically written. Everything I had to say seemed to be absolutely appropriate to the moment. I had no difficulty about recalling lines, but at the end of a day or a night's shoot, you have to prepare for the next day, and it's at that time you locate the scene you're going to do in terms of the whole. I have to say that the work that we did for six weeks before we even started any shooting was tremendously helpful to me in the six months that followed."

What did these six weeks involve? "The re-writing and the discussions of character and storyline with the director, the writer and the producer. Now Troy Kennedy-Martin is a writer who has so many ideas in his head that he finds it very difficult to commit to any one of them, and it was the director's insistence that he be panned down which I think helped the quality of the writing and the overall quality of the series. Each episode has a different character, particularly the last two. Episode five is quite different to all the rest, it's much more an of an action episode with lots of guns going off and people chasing each other."

After Emma's death Craven goes into the police station, it must have been difficult to pitch these scenes at the right level. "I recall it as an attempt to represent a man in a situation where he's struggling to hang onto his sanity and not break down, not to let go of grief, as it happens in real life, having obstacles thrown in his way. For instance, he leaves that interview with his immediate superior and goes into the corridor, he gulps, and then gets accosted by the sex lady, who breaks down for him. That's rather



Ronald Craven (Bob Peck) meets his superior, Rams (John Woodvine), at the scene of Lower's final fall in the episode *Burden of Proof*

odd as well, the actress chosen to do the part said "I don't think a woman would do that, it's so insensitive" and the whole point about that character was that she was being insensitive, she thought she was being sympathetic, and in other words the actress had completely missed the point."

EDGE OF DARKNESS seems full of these extras that Craven stumbled across in passing. "They each serve to highlight his dilemma or unusual position, his isolation, and the feeling of ineffectualness."

Fantasy enters the series when Craven talks to his dead daughter and she is able to tell him the things about herself he never knew. "That centres back to a very fundamental difference that the writer had with the director. By the time I came into it, they'd already decided, or were just coming to terms with the idea that the daughter should die right at the very beginning. The difference they had was that Troy Kennedy-Martin wanted Craven to know absolutely what his daughter had been doing, to conceal it from the police investigation, and conduct his own investigation in the light of that knowledge. So his previously intelligent daughter, with his knowledge, has got herself involved in this world-based scientific group and would have been doing illegal acts. That's something a policeman couldn't admit to, so he would have been letting it happen, and in a way assuaging a policeman's conscience. Because a policeman has to obey the law, he's just letting it happen."

"That would have meant that for many episodes the audience would have been hoodwinked by the character of Craven, and would have a sense of betrayal when he has to reveal at the end that he knew all along what his daughter was up to, and the thing that weighed heavily in Troy's estimation was that when it came to the confrontations between the forces of good and evil, the argument presented on the anti-nuclear frontline were going to be presented by Craven. So it was necessary that he had the information stored, being fully conversant with what his daughter was doing, and all its implications."

"If, as the director wanted, Craven was to be ignorant of this all the time, it means that someone else has to fulfill that role and that's what the character of Jedburgh took over. So as the series went on, and those ideas and arguments had to take place, and they took place more and more, so Jedburgh's character came more and more to the fore, and Craven took a back seat."

"The reason that it was shot the way it was, and that the story was formulated the way it was, was because Martin Campbell decided that he wanted the audience to go through the experience, to travel with Craven, and for everything the audience discovered to be Craven's discovery. I think that was the right decision. That also helps to explain why Craven didn't turn into a tree at the end, because the confrontation was much nearer the end, and it is all to do with Craven sitting by the side of the loch surrounded by bars of plutonium and being shot by a sniper's bullet as he was running towards the image of his daughter, and as he fell, he turned into a

tree. It was a very expensive and complicated special effect they had in mind. I think they could have achieved it but with simpler methods than they intended, but the reason it was cut wasn't entirely to do with expense. It was more integral to the nature of the way that the story eventually unfolded."

Craven, the reserved policeman and Jedburgh, the brash CIA man seem an unlikely double act. "I think that Troy's biggest enjoyment was writing lines for Jedburgh and making that big, expansive character. Well, of course that character worked well in contrast to Craven, they offset each other and worked well as a combination; the world-based, experienced, gun-toting, politically experienced Texan, and a rather parochial policeman with limited horizons. Another difference between them is that Jedburgh's closest relationships have been with servicemen, and he's able to shut himself off from grief. There's a scene where his manservant is sobbing, and he has shut himself off from that emotionally. Craven has also gone through tragic bereavements, his wife first and then his daughter, and is affected by them, but tries not to be. He's trying to do something practical to assuage his conscience or his emotional response to that situation. Jedburgh is in contrast to that."



CIA agent Darius Jedburgh (Joe Don Baker) in his white Rolls Royce outside the House of Commons in the episode *Burden of Proof*

After Craven is shot Craven tells the soldiers "I am not on your side!". Was Craven ever on their side? "There is an overall pattern to that. Jedburgh's character is a law unto himself, operating within a world-wide CIA movement, and somehow stepped outside the rules of that organisation, having been betrayed by them, he then decides to blow up Scotland. Craven, having been a pillar of society, a very good copper, as he goes through the process of investigating what his daughter was up to and what her motives were is slowly educated, more and more relentlessly, almost against his better instincts, to a pacifist line. That's why he says "I am not on your side", because the forces of law and order have just executed Jedburgh and they let him off because they see him as being their representative."

"He knows he's going to die of radiation sickness and it's not very pleasant, and a quick end would have been quite merciful, but he didn't want to be involved in the shoot-out, "like as many of the bastards as you can with 'em" is Jedburgh's true attitude. I think he feels guilt about his lack of involvement prior to his daughter's death. I think that's what his guilt's about. The suicide is connected with his approaching death anyway, inevitable radiation sickness, death. You must remember as well that Jedburgh's mental instability, although it may have been innate, it would maybe also be accelerated by radiation poisoning. Because it can strike your brain or anywhere, any of your bodily functions will be struck at random."

There seems to be a touch of incest and jealousy in Craven's relationship to his daughter. "It's inevitable because she's such an attractive girl and he's a single parent. The boyfriend, yes, but in

view of the fella's character, that's understandable. I think that feeling of jealousy is standard for fathers. I haven't got to the age where my daughter is being approached by young men, but there's a certain proprietorial attitude, inevitably."

The silent walk after Craven is left alone after his daughter's body is taken away must have been very daunting when Bob first saw it in the script. "When I read that scene I knew it was going to be a very good scene. It was very carefully written, very tightly written. It was one of the strongest scenes. I was looking forward to doing it, and it was very carefully worked out, but that's how Martin tends to direct anyway. You also have to allow it to be an actor's scene as well, because one of the good things that film and television does that it's more difficult to do in the theatre is get very close in and explore what someone's thinking and feeling without anything being said. Martin wasn't afraid to do that and took the camera in close. There were certain things that worked in my favour when we were doing that shoot, and that is that lack of sleep and fatigue and tight shoots. The amount of thinking I had to do as well actually contributed towards helping to establish the man's supposed state of mind."

"So when we came to do that scene we'd already shot, what, four or five weeks (I can't remember) down in London, and then we went up to Yorkshire to do another five weeks, so we were well into the series then. Then we had come to the meat of the tragedy which is in the first episode. That was a very good scene. I wasn't entirely happy with the way Emma's bedroom was represented, but it was a very nice exercise, plotting our way round this room, accommodating the camera. I think it was a man who'd just lost his daughter and was trying to come to terms with it and understand how or why on earth anyone would want to do that. What he does is go and put himself into her environment, to try and soak in what it was like to be her and he ends up lying on her bed, surrounded by all her personal belongings, holding a teddy bear and a gun, and trying to make the equation between them, and finding a dildo, which created quite a stir among the police. They couldn't stomach that. I think that it was when they read "dildo" in the script that they asked for their name to be taken off the credit. Done in the wrong way it could have been terribly shocking. But the whole point about that insert there was that he goes to her drawers, he finds a passport and photographs and then he uncovers this dildo which is a shock to him, he hasn't really come to terms with the fact that she's a woman, and she has her own sexual entity. But what's clever about it is that it prepares you, or it sets up a bigger shock, which is the gun, which comes out next."

Was there much police involvement in the production? "In an advisory capacity. You know that Troy Kennedy-Martín was part of Z CARS, and I think he hadn't really updated his knowledge of the police since those days, which were years before. There was all this police procedure, particularly in the early episodes, and they wanted it to be authentic, as far as possible."

Was it likely that Craven would be left in the house after the murder of his daughter? "I think that was dramatic license. But the audience was asked to accept that he was an exceptional policeman and a man of exceptional character who's already coped with bereavement before, and quite close to his senior officer, who I happen to know very well, having worked with him in the RSC in things like *NICHOLAS NICKLEBY* for years. You know, four or five years I've worked with him, or longer. Let me see, I must have worked with John Woodvine over a period of something like eight years. So that relationship was all sort of ready made. I think he was asking him, as a human being, to divulge more about what he knew in order to help the man through his grief. Not just acting as an investigating policeman."

"He actually lets go of his grief and has a good cry when he leaves the North and heads down to London, so that when he hits London, and then has to confront a different police force, a different set of people, he is washed clean in a way." Is Emma a symptom of this grief? "It's quite a well known phenomenon you know. Before we started filming part of my research was going to doctors and asking "How does grief manifest itself and what

advice would you give" and my local GP said "I recommend a good cry". But he said it can manifest itself in all sorts of weird ways, and some people will appear to be completely unaffected and in fact their bereavement will be eating away at them in some way and then they'll have a sudden and total collapse or they might start to go off the rails socially, or take to drink, or their work will go downhill and nobody can pin it down to anything particular. Unless it's accounted for in a natural and healthy way, a bereavement like this can be quite devastating.

"One of the ways it can manifest itself, particularly if people have been used to each other's company, is that they will imagine that they're there and start talking to someone as though they're there. If someone else overhears it, it can be quite frightening, because the other person is so real to the bereaved person that it seems supernatural. It's an extension of that. It's a very common phenomena and usually fades over a period. Craven is able to come to terms with it, control his grief, suppress it, come to terms with the fact that she is gone. Then when she reappears, it's almost as though it's a great relief that he's able to accept that he hasn't come to terms with it, that he does still want her there and need her, and he's glad that he's going to join her, and she actually says at one stage, doesn't she, "Don't you want to come and join me?". I think that's something he does want, but feels he's got a job to do first."

Did Bob do much research into the role of Craven. "I spent a couple of days in Bradford with the police there, because we did film in...what the devil's it's name, it's got a very odd name...right in the middle of Bradford there's a big police station, near the museum of film, photography or something, wonderful museum up there, and very near Bradford Alhambra as well. It's a brand new building. We were in there. I went up and spent two days with a Detective Inspector who had eight murders on his desk, and about a year after the series came out, I saw on the news that he had solved one of them. It happened to be a murder he was investigating. I went out with him, and he did some interviews in the flat next door to this place where a social worker had been murdered by a man that she had put inside, and he'd come back, killed her, stabbed her, and then set fire to the flat. The inspector took me along incognito as it were, nobody asked me who I was, they assumed I was a policeman, and interviewed the people next door. A year later this crime was actually solved. They knew very well who it was, but they had to prove it. Took about two years."

Concentrating as it does on so many black themes, **EDGE OF DARKNESS** contains quite a lot of humour. "Actually, it was a very dry humour that my character had, but I think he was amused by the American that had suddenly loomed into his life. He just found the whole lifestyle, and everything he did, larger than life and I think that at one stage I said "I find that hard to believe." The character was such an eye-opener to him, to wander into a man's flat and find COME DANCING on the telly, I think he found it all rather bizarre. So, yeah, and even if you don't get the laugh lines yourself, as an actor it is amusing to serve up and be a part of witty dialogue. But I did worry a lot of the time, and voiced this worry to Martin, about this doom-laden character confronting an audience week after week, hour after hour, and then just turning off. "The question is, when do I get to smile?" That was what I kept asking him. "Right at the beginning actually, picking up the daughter". There was some sort of faint irony that creeps in in the early stages of the relationship with Jedburgh."

Did Bob guess that the series would be so successful? "When we were making this thing, we all knew that we were enjoying it. It was hard work, that it was good. But we were worried about various aspects of it. One of the worries was that it was going to take us six months to film, and then we had to wait a year for it to come out. It came out at the end of 1985. And there was all the miner's strike stuff going to be out of date, and also that the nuclear issues would be history. But of course that proved not to be the case. They became more topical, rather than less. After the series had been shown a couple of times, there was then Chernobyl. It was then shown around the world shortly after Chernobyl and places like Belgium, Greece, New Zealand and

Australia. The series had a particularly big impact there apparently, because of their nuclear obsessions."

Is it true that Troy Kennedy-Martín had contacts with the secret services on which he drew during the writing of **EDGE OF DARKNESS**? Troy had information which only became public a long time after he'd got hold of it, and I think he used to work for intelligence of some sort. I think he was stationed in Cyprus, as part of an intelligence gathering service, and he's kept contact with the people he worked with then. He knew about this plutonium register and he knew that there were discrepancies between figures in the registry and actual amounts manufactured. He also knew that, in spite of an international agreement to the contrary, British industry was supplying plutonium to America, very likely for military purposes. You see, Troy knew about that, and that premise is the basis on which the whole story is based, the illegal sale of plutonium internationally."

Is Bob interested in green politics? "Green politics. Well, very sympathetic, but I can't claim to have any specialised knowledge. It was an educational journey for me as much as anything. I think the idea was to awaken people's awareness to ecological problems, and it did that for me as well. But it is a fact that while we were making it, and while I was involved in it, every day there seemed to be some news item which had special reference to what we were doing. And it continues to be the case, I got quite interested in environmental issues. You know there's a visual bun, or some statement is made on the screen about a real movement called Gans, or association or something, who dissociate themselves from anything that the series has to say. But of the two works of reference that Troy gave me at the beginning, one was Lovelock's book called "Gaia" and the other was a book on King Arthur, about the Knights of the Round Table and the other mystical journeys from Camelot, the search for the Holy Grail and



Craven (Bob Peck) with his daughter's teddy bear and the gun he has discovered in her room from the episode *Compensate Leave*

that sort of thing. I think there's reference in **EDGE OF DARKNESS** to those journeys away from the planet, looking for the Holy Grail, looking for somewhere else for the whole human race to go and live."


Was Bob influenced by Lovelock's ideas. "I've seen a television programme that Lovelock made which took his theories one step further, and funny enough, a film I've since made, **SLIPSTREAM**, it is not really a science fiction movie, and it's set in a future world where there has been a drastic climatic environmental change. So the world as we know it doesn't exist any more and is dominated by a strong wind. Again, on the screen there's an explanation of that. The explanation goes something like: "The long-awaited nuclear holocaust never came, but due to man's slow abuse of the environment the world's climate has changed." And that is still a threat, there is evidence of it happening. But I think Lovelock was suggesting that the slow destruction of the environment won't necessarily result in a slow change in the climate. It will accelerate, a sort of pendulum swing, he suggests that major reversals of the climate, as of a pendulum swing, have been happening over periods of millions of years, and that we're heading towards one that our abuse of the world, of the ecology at the moment, will bring on."

EDGE OF DARKNESS is more of an ensemble piece than other productions. "I think that was one of the good things about it, that everybody had an input. There were things that went wrong. You have to understand that the preparations go on for something like a year before, and they had been writing it for seven years, on and off, trying to put some form to those ideas. The form quickly took shape when the director and producer actually focused on it, and production dates were set, and then he has to focus his mind. But the rewriting along agreed lines happened prior to shooting up to the end of episode four. Then we went off to shoot, and Troy was left to deal with episode five and six, and they were going to be shot in reverse order, so we had to shoot the end, in Scotland, before we went to Wales, which was the final part of the shoot. And he didn't do it, so when we came to shoot in Scotland we were having to do rewrites as well, and we had run out of time. We ran out of weather, for one thing, and fortuitously, as a way we couldn't do the end that Troy had written. We had to reshoot it in Wales, while we were there, shooting underground. We then had to take time out and find locations which matched the locations we had used in Scotland. It gave us an opportunity to rewrite the end, and in a way it was much more satisfactory than the version we would have shot in Scotland."

"Then we had all this gun-toting stuff underground in Wales to do as well. That was quite an experience. I think it was for three weeks, we virtually worked without seeing daylight. We would drive from the hotel along these terrible narrow, winding, Welsh country lanes, and eventually drive up a sheep track, and then into the side of the hill, and go underground. We would usually go up there before dawn, and we'd emerge at lunchtime and then go back down again, when we came out again it was night. That went on for three weeks. It got pretty uncomfortable, but I quite enjoyed all that. We were actually filming in quarries where Churchill had deemed that the nation's treasures should be housed during the war. Was it Tom Jones who used to sing a song "...something...something...behind the green door"? The entrance to this slate quarry was through a massive green door and loeries just used to drive in, and in fact it was taken over by the Ministry of Defence for storage or something. Only a year before, all this air-conditioned machinery had been taken out of the mountain, and it had been handed over to the slate quarriers again. They're the biggest slate quarry in the world, I think, at Blaenau Ffestiniog, and I think shortly after we left they were going to blow the top of the mountain off so that they could safely go on mining it, because there was some danger about using explosives. But the site was amazing because the caverns were man-made and were huge. One was as big as the main hall in St. Paul's Cathedral, in fact it was called "The Cathedral". They had these stone-built sheds underground which had had roofs, and we used those for the condominium. The paper labels were still stuck to the walls, with the names of the painters and paintings that had

been stored there during the war. It was quite bizarre, as that that's the purpose that we put it to."

Many thanks to Bob Peck for taking time out of his busy schedule to talk to us.



Compiled by
Andrew Pixley

Episode Guide

Principal Cast:

Bob Peck (*Ronald Craven*), Joe Don Baker (*Darius Jedburgh*) with Joanne Whalley (*Emma Craven*), Jack Watson (*James Godbolt*), Charles Kay (*Pendleton*), John Woodvine (*Det. Chief Supt. Ross*), Ian McNeice (*Harcourt*), Tim McInnerny (*Terry Shields*), Zolt Wurmser (*Clemmy*), Hugh Fraser (*Robert Bennett*), Kenneth Nelson (*Jerry Grogan*)

Written by Troy Kennedy Martin

Music by Eric Clapton with Michael Kamen

Series adviser: Walt Patterson

Production manager: Rosemarie Padviskias

Make-up designer: Daphne Crocker

Costume designer: Denver Hall

Film sound: Dickie Bird

Film editors: Adrian Fisher (Episodes One to Three), Don Rae (Episodes Four to Six)

Dubbing mixer: Ron Jones

Designer: Graeme Thomson

Photography: Andrew Dunn

Producer: Michael Wearing

Director: Martin Campbell

4th November 1985

1: "COMPASSIONATE LEAVE"

Guest Cast: Jack Watson, John Woodvine, Joanne Whalley, Charles Kay with:

The Police: David Friesman (*Det. Sgt. Jones*), Randal Herley (*Asst. Chief Constable Elliott*), Bill Stewart (*Det. Insp. Dingle*), Martin Dale, Mike Kelly, Peter Ivatts, Peter Lorenzelli (*Yorkshire Detectives*), Ian Blunsedale, Martin Oldfield (*Police Drivers*), *In Yorkshire*: Alan Starkey (*Monty*), Gordon Wainman (*Caretaker*), Rita May (*Tea Lady*), Joan Campion (*Hospital Allover*), Imogen Stanley (*Young Emma*) with Michael Meacher MP. (*Hemlock*)

"Hi, Dad... I'll be at college 'til ten... Can you pick me up?... Love you... Bye." A message left on his answering machine for Ronald Craven: widower, Yorkshire detective, a loner. One daughter, Emma: a clever girl with more to her life than her father chooses to see. One windswept night as the two run for the shelter of the house, a gunman appears. "Craven, you bloody murdering bastard!". Emma runs forward. The man fires and kills her. Craven is presented with his most harrowing case, one which leads him to learn that maybe there was a great deal about his daughter that he never realised.

Broadcast: 2130 - 2225

11th November 1985

2: INTO THE SHADOWS

Guest Cast: Charles Kay, Ian McNeice, Tim McInnerny, Joanne Whalley with:

The Police: John Woodvine, David Friesman, Paul Harpoletz

(*Det.-Chief Supt. Elton*), Bill Stewart (Robert Hickson (*Desk sergeant*)).

In London: Anthony Douce (*Corliss*), Joel Cuirara (*Merryweather*), Mac McDonald (*Kelly*), Lesley Barr (*Ellen*), Sue Cook (*TV Interviewer*), Jay Roberts (*Shadow*).

"Your daughter was some sort of terrorist, wasn't she?" The police keep close tabs on Craven in London as he continues his investigations. He is also contacted by the mysterious Pendleton and his partner Harcourt who have some disturbing revelations about Emma's past as a "terrorist". Next he meets the CIA agent Darius Jedburgh for a night out on the town, and sees a file on the Gaia organisation of which his daughter was a member.
Broadcast: 2130 - 2225

1: COMPASSIONATE LEAVE and 2: INTO THE SHADOWS repeated on BBC1 as edited compilation 1: COMPASSIONATE LEAVE on 19th December 1985 at 2200 - 2345 and on BBC2 on 10th May 1992 at 2205 - 2350



Craven (Bob Peck) is questioned about his daughter and Gaia in episode 2

18th November 1985

3: BURDEN OF PROOF

Guest Cast: John Woodvine, Zoe Wamnsaker Charles Kay, Ian McNeice with Joanne Whalley, Kenneth Nelson, Hugh Fraser
The Police: David Fleeshman, Paul Hingolton, Bill Stewart,
At the Common: Allan Cuthbertson (*Chalwell*), Sarah Martin (*Polly Pelham*), Paul Williamson (*Brewer*), Trevor Bowen (*Childs*), Rowland Davies (*Maberley*), Peter Pacey, Ron Webster, Philip Reader (*Journalists*)

In London: Tim McInerney, Joanne Whalley, Struan Rodger (*Mac*)

On Television "In Retrospect": Jack Watson with Neville Barber and Paul Nicholson (*Clergyman on TV*)

At the Hospital: Roy Heather (*Lower*), Kristopher Kum (*Hospital Doctor*), Molly Guilloffe, Carol Sandy (*Nurses*)

In Yorkshire: Imogen Stanley,

"Lower, you put her away ten years ago, remember?" The police close in on the prime suspect from Craven's past and are set to close the file on Emma. But with IIP's activities under scrutiny at Westminster, Craven's doubts about the motives for the killing become certainties. To learn the truth, he returns alone to his Yorkshire home, and wants to face his daughter's murderer.
Broadcast: 2130 - 2225

Repeated: 13th May 1992 2125 - 2215

25th November 1985

4: BREAKTHROUGH

Guest Cast: Jack Watson, Zoe Wamnsaker, Charles Kay, Ian McNeice with Sean Caffrey (*McCroon*), Joanne Whalley, Patrick Godfrey (*Oakley*), John Woodvine, John Woodvine, Hugh Fraser, Allan Cuthbertson, Matthew Guinness (*Mennies*), Trevor Bowen, Tony Mathews (*Toby Berwick*), Jo Ross (*Miriam Berwick*), Manning Redwood (*Schansker*), Jerry Harte (*Wagner*), Mike Fitzgerald (*John*), Jim Dunk (*Police Sergeant*), Imogen Stanley.

"What are you going to do about it?" "I'm going in." A question from the beyond the grave to the man with nothing left to

lose. The confrontation with Emma's killer, McCroon, proves decisive to the destiny of Craven. Strangely renewed by the symptoms of his breakdown, he re-enters the world obsessed to enter Northmoor at any cost. With help from some friends he narrowly gains a computerised map of the mines, and finds himself pursued through the Barbican.

Broadcast: 2130 - 2225

Repeated: 20th May 1992 2125 - 2220

3: BURDEN OF PROOF and 4: BREAKTHROUGH repeated on BBC1 as compilation 2: BURDEN OF PROOF on 20th December 1985 at 2220 - 0005

2nd December 1985

5: NORTHMOOR

Guest Cast: Jack Watson, Charles Kay, Ian McNeice, Hugh Fraser with:

At the Enquiry: Kenneth Nelson, Allan Cuthbertson, Sarah Martin, Paul Williamson

At Northmoor: Trevor Bowen, Brian Croucher (*Connors*)

Jennifer Rose (*Security Lady*)

"Three men coming in - the same way as last time." Craven and Jedburgh's desperate mission, to breach the underworld nuclear facility with a deadly secret, with Godbolt's help. But somebody knows their plan, and as Emma and Gaia found out, drastic deterrents await unwanted visitors and prevent them from reaching the hot cell.

Broadcast: 2130 - 2225

Repeated: 27th May 1992 2125 - 2220

9th December 1985

6: FUSION

Guest Cast: Charles Kay, Ian McNeice, Joanne Whalley, Kenneth Nelson with Hugh Fraser, Jeremy Child (*Minister*), Zoe Wamnsaker, Allan Cuthbertson

In Scotland: David Jackson (*Colonel Lawson*), Sean McCarthy (*Nallers*), Irene Sinters (*Mrs Girvan*), Ann Scott-Jones (*Jemma*), Michael Mackenzie (*Gaffer*), Bill Craven (*Golf club porter*), David Heller (*CIA man*)

"Jedburgh's at Glenaeagles. And he's not playing golf." The irascible American at bay: with 20 kilos of plutonium in an explosive configuration. There's a score to settle with Grogan at a Star Wars conference before the final dance of death. One man, possessed by the mysterious wisdom of Gaia, can avert catastrophe...

Broadcast: 2130 - 2225

Repeated: 3rd June 1992 2125 - 2220

5: NORTHMOOR and 6: FUSION repeated on BBC1 as compilation 3: NORTHMOOR on 21st December 1985 at 2135 - 2320

A BBC production in association with Lashart Television International [BBC2]

Six Episodes - Colour



Bob Peck during the filming of the last episode of EDGE OF DARKNESS

by Mark Harris

1969 was the year that the major ITV regions pressed the button which saw all new programming broadcast in colour, and **FREEWHEELERS** was no exception to the new season, with April 1970 seeing the start of its fourth season and a new era for what was by now a phenomenally popular fixture within the schedules.

After three successful seasons, **FREEWHEELERS** was already earning Southern Television good money in overseas sales, culminating in the deal with West German TV that precipitated the loss of Geoffrey Toone as Karl Otto Von Gelb. Scrambling, the explosion of Von Gelb's island base Thanet at the end of season three had seen off one of television's finest villains before he could make good his escape in one of the fleet of mini-cars, but such a move had not been producer Chris McMaster's original intention. Ironically, the fourth season's scripts had already been written to include Von Gelb until the sale of the show to West Germany made the inclusion of a renegade ex-Nazi a definite no-go, and a nifty bit of re-writing had to be done to introduce a female replacement.

The move to colour, added to the financial success of **FREEWHEELERS**, also led to the fourth season being the first to be filmed outside the UK. No longer would Fawley Power Station have to double for every villain's base; this time cast and crew were off to Majorca, now doubling as the middle European country of Spartak. The principal effect of the series' emergence as a valuable export commodity was to remove the "it could happen here" element of the Von Gelb stories. As the subsequent fourth season unfolded, the scenery often came to overshadow the action.

Production had also settled into a rhythm. Looking at a typical year, in January Chris McMaster would meet Barclay Smith, Southern Television's Head of Programmes, to view a couple of segments from the previous season before agreeing the budget for the forthcoming thirteen episodes.

From being given the green light until March, McMaster would meet with the writers in London to map out the first story (the double story format had proved a major selling point). Once the brain-storming, led forcefully by McMaster himself, was over and the final scripts commissioned, six weeks would be devoted to the planning of the initial episodes, with casting spread across three weeks.

By May, the cast of the latest **FREEWHEELERS** was crisscrossed into the tiny rehearsal room opposite Herods, with a few days break separating studio recording in Southampton from location filming ten days later. As all but the final season of the series scheduled the overseas side of the plot for the second story, the New Forest continued to be invaded by the **FREEWHEELERS** crew every June.

There was a ten day holiday break for cast and crew before the task of scripting, planning and casting for the second story started in July, for filming to commence mid-August. Producer McMaster's biggest problem would invariably be getting his

regular cast back for the second story; hence the disappearance of Valentine Dyall as O'Toole after six episodes of Season Four. Fortunately for the series, it was a problem McMaster usually managed to solve.

With editing not complete until late November, production of **FREEWHEELERS** was truly a full time occupation for Chris McMaster. Although closely involved with every aspect, particularly scripting, as well as the usual production chores and directing many of the episodes himself, McMaster was blessed with a loyal crew. Film cameraman Sam Brethault and Geoff Selling as well as editor Mike Womersley worked on the show throughout the eight season run, whilst the rest of Southern Television could only watch as the **FREEWHEELERS** team set sail on another madcap adventure.

By the advent of colour, therefore, it took a full eleven months to produce a complete season of **FREEWHEELERS**, but as the series started to sell overseas, the opportunities for featuring international locations were opening ever wider.

By now the original cast had undergone some drastic changes. The decisions to make changes were various: Gregory Phillips left after Season One having caused problems on set, others because McMaster felt that fresh faces were needed. Of the line up in the first season, only Buchan and Tom Owen as Bill Cowan remained. Mary Maude had been replaced in the third season by Carole Mowlam, and Chris Chittell had also departed by the fourth season to be replaced by Adrian Wright as Mike Hobbs. Wright, now living and working in Australia, was the show's first on-up as the newly launched *Look-In* magazine gave extensive coverage. Ironically, it is Chris Chittell of the **FREEWHEELERS** kids who is still to be seen regularly as **EMMERDALE**'s Eric Pollard.

For the fourth season, plot and players may well have changed, but even without the departed Von Gelb, the key elements of the show remained untouched. Credibility for 'the kids' (as they were always known) continued involvement with Colonel Buchan and Mif was maintained because the plot always stressed that they became involved by accident, bumping into Buchan who is already on the scene. Nevertheless, Buchan always respected his helpers.



Chris McMaster (2nd left) waiting for the rain to stop with Geoff Selling (far left) and Lewis Rudd (far right), the men who saved **FREEWHEELERS**

The new stories dealt with Spartika, an oil-rich Balkan republic and its neighbouring state Zagora, which is sponsoring an attempted coup by Colonel Aristides to seize power in Spartika, before going to take over the oil resources of the world using the secret weapon Inferno. Now if all this seems similar to the escapades of Von Gelb and Co., that is not far from the truth. The decision to discard Geoffrey Toone as Von Gelb ("Ah, the estimable Colonel Buchan I presume!" etc., etc.) in the light of the sale to West Germany was only taken after scripts had been commissioned featuring the ex-Nazi. Presumably, the villain had decided that seven failed attempts at invading Britain was enough, and he would have a crack at the rest of the Europe instead.

The problem was solved by re-writing Toone's dialogue and casting Pamela Ann Davy as Colonel Aristides. Character changes were minimal and Aristides was soon kidnapping scientists and diplomats in true Von Gelb style. Also on the side of evil were Colonel Themistokles Thrakos (Bruno Barnabe), Spartika's Minister of War and co-conspirator of Aristides; assassin Burton (Ashley Woods) and the replacements for Monk and Boone: Schwarz (Howard Rawlinson) and Rakosi (a young Christopher Cazenove).

The opening episodes drew heavily on Chris McMaster's experiences with his father, the legendary Shakespearean Actor-Manager Anew McMaster. As he told *TV Times*: "I recalled going to the docks to watch my father's company leave for a tour of Egypt. I watched all the baggage - the scenery, props and costumes - go through Customs, and thought that this would be a perfect way for smugglers to operate." The scene was lifted straight into Episode One where Bill and Mike land jobs with the playing company of O'Toole (Valentine Dyall), who was based directly on Anew McMaster. No sooner have the boys arrived, than in true **FREEWHEELERS** tradition they bump into Colonel Buchan and his assistant Fiona, and discover that gas containers are hidden in the troupe's luggage. Two of the company are not what they seem, the group sets sail for Spartika, and before long our heroes discover that Aristides is behind the whole affair.



The **FREEWHEELERS** Mike (Adrian Wright), Major Graham (Eric Flynn), Max (John Colclough) and Sue (Wendy Padbury) line up for a fifth season

Aristides' mission, Burton, plans to assassinate Spartika's President Keflis (Roger Delgado), but the kids thwart that one, leaving Aristides, Thrakos and Zagora's leader Colonel Voronov to use Inferno to destroy the world's oil rigs. Not surprisingly, they are defeated and Aristides perishes at the now obligatory blowing up of the villains' secret base.

The fourth season was also marked by the show's first foray outside the UK for its location shooting. Spain doubled for Spartika, with Majorca providing extra sparkle after thirty-two half-hours of Salisbury Plain and the New Forest which characterised the Von Gelb years. Unfortunately, it was precisely the sort of "it couldn't happen here" element that had made the first three seasons such a success, and was to affect the future

batches of **FREEWHEELERS**. In contrast to the new season of **DOCTOR WHO**, the decision of Southern Television to take **FREEWHEELERS** overseas was not to the series' credit in the eyes of its large core of fans.

By the fifth season, it was 1970 and children's TV drama had changed significantly in the wake of **FREEWHEELERS**. ITV had unveiled **CATWEAZLE** and were making teenage thrillers such as **THE TINGAREE MYSTERY**, whilst at the BBC the Jon Pertwee era of **DOCTOR WHO** was beginning. Yet **FREEWHEELERS** still led the way, and after the fourth season was screened between April and July 1970, a fifth was aired within two months of editing, being completed in November 1970.

FREEWHEELERS reacted to the more challenging drama series now being made for kids in the wake of the IBA's instructions to improve quality with a more conventional storyline in its fifth season: a top secret fuel system falling victim (initially) to some international villains. This season saw the severance of all cut links to the first season. With Tom Owen already having left, Ronald Leigh-Hunt landed the part of Steve McQueen's Porsche racing team manager in the movie **LE MANS**, rendering him unavailable for the new season.

In fact, the original storyline was conceived by Leigh-Hunt himself. The actor's passion for fast cars and motor sport had already led him to arrange for Lotus to provide Colonel Buchan's cars in **FREEWHEELERS**, and he now approached Chris McMaster with the idea that a revolutionary fuel system should be tested in a racing car, and that Buchan would be carrying out the testing. Unfortunately, that was as far as the idea went, but it was sufficient to provide the basis for the new season; it was thus ironic that Ronald Leigh-Hunt should miss out this season altogether.

His replacement was the more-than-adequate Eric Flynn as Major Graham, who spent some weeks harrying around Thruxton race track behind the wheel of a Formula 3 car before returning to the BBC to play **IVANHOE**. Colonel Buchan's absence was explained as a secret mission to Japan. Amongst the kids, Wendy Padbury had joined the cast from **DOCTOR WHO**, but the high spot was in the introduction of a new pair of hench-villains: Liverpoolian smuggler Joseph/Dermot Ryan and criminal double agent Thadus/Cassius 'Fingers' Burke (continuity of names being as accurate as ever on the series). This pair were played by Richard Shaw and Michael Ripper respectively. Shaw had been a regular in British support features of the Fifties, and post **FREEWHEELERS** has combined the odd bit of acting (yet another of Bel Lynch's boyfriends in **CORONATION STREET**) with a thriving property business. Ripper, a noted support actor in British comedy and horror films for many years, had actually begun his acting career with Anew McMaster's touring company.

The new duo were altogether more threatening than any of their predecessors, and certainly the show's most memorable pair of heavies since Monk and Boone in the first two seasons - especially when they tried to bury Mike and Max (John Colclough) alive in the foundations of the M3. Strangely enough, **FREEWHEELERS**'s plagiarism of the James Bond films was reversed when this particular sequence was used in the 007 epic **DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER**. Colclough had joined the show as a replacement for Tom Owen, who had left to star in a period drama for Thames. Thereafter, Owen was seen little on television and emerged as a theatrical impresario by the middle 1980s.

Chris McMaster's attention to detail was still in evidence on some occasions: Wendy Padbury played Sue Craig, the daughter of Professor Craig (Eric Dodson) who was first seen in the second half of Season Three when kidnapped by Von Gelb. He was now the inventor of the revolutionary power pack and fuel, Zylon, which the villains were after. Clearly the world of **FREEWHEELERS** was such that being a scientist was a most dangerous occupation, with at least a couple of kidnappings guaranteed!

The principal villain was South American racing driver Cesare Montero, played by Richard Montez (also known as Ricardo

the dead Nero to current assistant of Colonel Buchan. She does remain, however, an oceanographer. The storyline was excellent, kidnapped diplomats (the world now having run out of scientists), villain Rufus Felton using a circus as a cover for sneaking key political figures, even a chase by a tank on Salisbury plain.

The season was well advised in staying UK-based, and offered some memorable sequences, most acutely the climax to Episode 1 in which Mike and Max are aboard a milk truck, pursued by Ryan and Burke, and pelt down the country lanes of Hampshire with milk charms being thrown left and right.

Unlike the rather one dimensional Max, Ryan and Burke were sufficiently well received to make a reappearance in the sixth season, which also saw the return of Colonel Buchan in the best **FREEWHEELERS** of all five colour seasons.

This time out, a crazed scientist called Professor John Banet (Jerome Willis) has adopted the identity of Nero and created (yet another) secret weapon, Medusa, as part of his plan to artificially create food from irradiated plankton. Initially motivated by good intentions, the Professor's marbles are well and truly lost as a result of an accidental dosage of gamma rays. Next, Nero is somewhat miffed when the world's governments won't listen to his crack-pot plan, so he plans to use Medusa to contaminate the plankton - and thus the world's fish supply - unless they cancel all wars. Ultimately his scheme is to remove all the oxygen from Earth's atmosphere using the plankton as a little tactic of world domination.

Joining Mike (Adrian Wright) and Sue (Wendy Padbury) - now a romantic couple off-screen just prior to Padbury's marriage to Melvyn Hayes - was Steve Walker, son of a Southampton cafe-owner and a handy bloke to have around. Steve was played by twenty-seven year old Leonard Gregory, last seen as Det. Sgt. West in **EASTENDERS**.

Jersey and Cornwall were the locations used in the first story, together with the Southampton Le Havre ferry, where Mike and Steve are working. On board they witness Ryan and Burke's daring six million pound gold bullion robbery. What six million pounds in gold bullion is doing on a cross-channel ferry, God only knows - but that's **FREEWHEELERS**!

Everything but the kitchen sink was piled into the first story. A jumbo by Ryan and Burke, an aerial battle featuring gliders, the kidnapping of more scientists on board the tall ship *Malcolm Miller* and the spectacular destruction of Nero's lighthouse (Von Geln had done the same in Season Two) were all included before, at the half-way stage, the narrative shifted to Holland. Here Ryan and Burke joined up with coo-man Commander Cane (Kevin Stoney) to retrieve the fortune in gold stolen in the first serial by Nero.

The season's highlights included a superb performance by Jerome Willis as Nero, as well as the more laid-back Commander Cane, Nero's European agent who initially befriends Mike and Sue before his designs on the gold become clear. Never one to forget a successful stunt, Chris McMaster also re-used the helicopter chase from Season Two as Buchan and Dr. Jo Bell (Jenny Tilly) are pursued across another South Cornwall headland by Nero's henchmen.

This was to be the last truly classic **FREEWHEELERS**. The Cornish locations brought back memories of the Von Geln era and, although a little older, Ronald Leigh-Hunt was in fine form as Buchan. Even when the season was re-screened in the late Eighties by Sky, the episodes held up well, despite some creaking dialogue and dodgy use of library film to denote the sub-atomic destruction of Nero's base.

Between the screening of the sixth and seventh seasons, the show's only novels appeared. Piccolo and TV Times jointly published two paperbacks, each with original stories written by Alan Fennell. The first, *The Sign of the Beaver*, featured the sixth season's cast, and promoted Dr. Jo Bell from former assistant to



The **FREEWHEELERS** in the first story of Season Seven, Mike (Adrian Wright) and Steve (Leonard Gregory) are joined by Jill (Caroline Ellis)

The second volume, *The Spy Game*, dealt with a deadly laser, murdered agents and repeated the first book's official link (never suggested in the series) that the kids are somehow part of MI6, rather than just casual bystanders with a knack of becoming involved. The characters in this second book reflected the changes in cast made by Chris McMaster (who had no input into or knowledge of the books) for the penultimate seasons of **FREEWHEELERS**. Gone were Buchan, Sue and Dr. Bell, and in their place were Jill and Colin Wade - the new man from MI6.

The only other adventures of the adventuresome kids that did not appear on television were those told in comic strip form through the pages of *Look-In* in 1971 and 1972. Artwork on the monochrome two-page work included Carlos Pano, and throughout these Mike, Max, Sue, Buchan and Dr. Jo Bell found themselves adventuring in Arab states, tracking down smugglers at Treceawth, combating the evil Sirensky and preventing politicians from being assassinated.

Perhaps the biggest blow for the seventh season was the final departure of Colonel Buchan. After five years, Ronald Leigh-Hunt was no longer quite as active as Buchan demanded him to be and he was already well into his fifties. It was also not have been easy for the actor to bring fresh depths out of Buchan having saved the world on at least nine occasions, and Leigh-Hunt duly left the production for a part in the initial line-up of ATV's **GENERAL HOSPITAL**. His replacement was the more dynamic but less believable Ray Armstrong as leather jacketed, square jawed and wrongly-accused MI6 agent Colin Wade.

The new season opened with Wade breaking through an Eastern Bloc checkpoint (another job for the New Forest) on a motorcycle before being framed for the kidnap of yet another scientist by mad General Grant (Michael Barmington). Grant intends to mount a military coup under the cover of a gigantic sealed-knot wargame, with the aid of Scorpio, developed by the aforementioned abducted Professor Kriev (Gerard Heinz). At the half-way stage, Wade and the kids find themselves as Sweden, hot on the trail of henchman Morris (Donald Morley) who has escaped with Scorpio.

The Swedish story continues with the emergence of Helga Laddstrom (Wanda Moore), a potty mining boss who plans to use Aes to blow up all the rival mines in the world. The decision to visit Scandinavia came about when a delegation from Swedish TV arrived in Southampton with a view to purchasing the series.

Producer McMaster was detailed to entertain the Swedes, which he did so well that he not only negotiated the sale, but also pulled off a deal to shoot the next season in Sweden. He was to repeat the trick for the eighth and final season.

The seventh season is McMaster's least favourite of all. The character of Helga Lindstrom was a poor villain, and the plot too reminiscent of the fourth season with Aristides on Majorca - although Helga had it in for the mining industry rather than the oil business which Aristides had a downer on.

Wendy Padbury had moved on to make a show with Davy Jones (ex of The Monkees) and in her place for the first half of the season came Caroline Ellis, an actress whose previous assignment had been as a singing bumblebee in the series **THE BUGALOOS** made in America. Caroline was very much a lover of the outdoors, and enjoyed riding which the character of Jill was required to do in the serial. Adrian Wright remained, as did Leonard Gregory, but it was to be their respective final seasons as well. The seventh season, along with the sixth and eighth, was sold widely abroad and are the only complete seasons to exist (the only other existing segment being the second season episode **Doomsday!** which exists in private hands). The colour seasons were shown by Sky in recent years, with the exception of Episode 2 from Season Six.

Another crucial factor in the decline of the series was its shift in time slot. Being moved back to a 4.20pm slot meant that many of the core teenage audience were still on their way home from school, and the plots were hardly suitable for the under-16s. Juvenile tastes had also moved on; Gerry Anderson was no longer making shows for kids and instead **FOLLYFOOT** and **THE TOMORROW PEOPLE** were pulling the audience. These were also the sort of programmes the station bosses were inclined towards.

Without villains such as Von Gelb, Monk, Boone, Ryan and Burke, the series lost most of its pace. Adrian Wright bowed out after the Swedish episode and it was a full twelve months between seasons and **FREEWHEELERS'** swansong. Any series must have a natural life, and for a children's drama to match up over one hundred episodes is testament in itself to the achievements of McMaster and his team. For the last season there was an improvement over the poorly received seventh season, and the standards of acting were amongst the highest of all the stories. Wendy Padbury returned to the cast, though the filming schedule meant that in one scene she got into a helicopter only to emerge seconds later - but four months pregnant. Miss Padbury's condition meant having to shoot her mainly from the waist up, and to only limited success.

Filming took place in France for three weeks in May, starting in the stifling heat of the Carnagie for a chase sequence through some swamps. After this, the crew moved on to film material at a religious festival at Les Saintes Marie on the shores of the Mediterranean - an event attended by gypsies from all over Europe. The team's next stop was the village of Vallon Pont d'Arc, 90 miles north-west of Marseille for the spectacular scene of Wendy Padbury, Martin Neil and Jenny Till shooting the rapids of the Ardèche River in Canadian two-man canoes, with a car chase on a mountain road shot nearby. Such was the interest generated by the team's presence, the French Television station ORTF believed that the latest James Bond film was in production at the village, and a film crew arrived from Paris to shoot McMaster's team in action. Other filming took place at the town of Chamonix.

Paired with nineteen year-old Martin Neil as Dave, Wendy's character of Sue Craig battled with Maylor and Crouch (Robert Gillespie and Neil McCarthy), henchmen to art collector Goddard (Peter Howell). Having manipulated a doddering art professor (on account of running out of scientists), Goddard has perfect copies of old masters painted and plans to use blindness-inducing Libra to rob the galleries of the world and leave fakes in place of the originals.

There were several departures for the eighth season's plot. For the first time, a 'goodie' - Doctor Hassell - is killed in the raid on Ashurst Research Centre in which Libra is stolen, and one of the kids' parents, Dave's dad Phil (Sam Kydd, a veteran film actor best known as **ORLANDO**) is forced to help the villains or his shady past will be revealed.

The action moves quickly to France, where the urbane Goddard reveals that his plan is to build a world-dominating computer by draining the inherent creativity within the stolen paintings. The kids are in the thick of things, as is military intelligence agent Caniffie (Bernard Horsfall, sporting a shaggy pony that Bachan would probably have him shot for). Once Goddard is disposed of, Libra, Maylor and Crouch fall into the hands of Hugh Fawell (Peter Myers), and as even more urbane villain than Goddard, who plans to use Libra to steal Britain's Think-Bank of patents, ideas and technology.

As swansongs go, the eighth season was not bad; characterisation was amongst the best of the entire series. Wendy Padbury was as gorgeous as ever, Donald Bisset as Rinford was well over the top as the archetypal absent-minded Professor, whilst Peter Howell recognised the single factor that **FREEWHEELERS'** best villains had done as making their personas so credible: the **EX-EMERGENCY WARD 10** star believed in the role.

Naylor and the Harrow-educated Crouch certainly left their predecessors Monk and Boone, not to mention Ryan and Burke, well behind in the brains stakes, whilst the pair also provided a poignant final sequence to the final episode of the final season. Handcuffed together, Naylor and Crouch walk off into the distance, each becoming the other. It marked the end of **FREEWHEELERS**.

As the eighth season was being transmitted, **FREEWHEELERS** was killed off - Southern's Head of Children's Programming Lewis Rudd deciding that the show had run its course. Chris McMaster reluctantly agreed, having enjoyed seven years in the planning and execution of the series, but recognising that the format had probably been exhausted. Nevertheless further stories had already been mapped out. Had the show continued, the next season was to have been filmed in Italy, with another under discussion in Germany.



Sue (Wendy Padbury) and Dave (Martin Neil) run into trouble at Goddard's Chateau in France during the first season of **FREEWHEELERS**

After **FREEWHEELERS**, Chris McMaster went on to create **ROGUE'S ROCK**, **PARK RANGER** and oversee **THE RAVELLED THREAD**, **SCARF JACK** and **MIDNIGHT IS A PLACE** for Southern, the latter earning a BAFTA award. But none could match **FREEWHEELERS**. **ROGUE'S ROCK** reflected the next logical step from the level of humour in the final season of **FREEWHEELERS**, whilst the last three arose from McMaster's love and near-encyclopedic knowledge of regency history.

Until Sky resurrected **FREEWHEELERS** for its Children's Channel, the show remained unrepented, but continued to sell overseas for Southern and its sales wing, Southern Pictures. McMaster left Southern's successor TVS in 1981 and has since been pursuing various writing projects, including a new format but updated **FREEWHEELERS** on which this writer is proud to be involved.

Of the actors who passed through the eight seasons, some have gone onto greater things whilst others have faded from sight. Apart from the early sole accorded Christopher Cazenove, and the mid-career presence of Johnny Briggs as the duplicitous Kerr in Season Three, Chris Chittell and Leonard Gregory upheld the soap tradition, Tom Owen popped up in an 1988 episode of **MINDER**, and Geoffrey Toone in the first instalment of **STRATHBLAIR**.

Of the other principal actors, Ronald Leigh-Hunt makes the occasional guest appearance on television, as do Robert Gillenpie, Jeanne Willis and Ray Armstrong. Less often to be seen are Michael Ripper and Wendy Padbury, the latter now divorced from Melvyn Hayes, but still looking not a day over 21. Looking back to the very early days, Mary Maude left acting after marriage to a solicitor, but recently returned in a BBC sitcom, whilst Ronald Govey, Michael Brennan, Gregory Phillips and Neil McCarthy have all sadly died.

As action/adventure, **FREEWHEELERS** was the essential programme to grow up with, offering probably more fast cars, tanks, helicopters, planes, speed boats, foreign locations, secret weapons and sheer excitement than any other children's programme. McMaster's genius for imagination and storytelling flair commanded total loyalty from the series' fans, and as one of the show's favorite lines from Buchan to the kids had it:

"That's it; that's the answer! Come on, let's go!"

FREEWHEELERS

Compiled by
Andrew
Pixley,
David Auger and Mark Harris

Episode Guide

SEASON FOUR

Regular Cast:

Ronald Leigh-Hunt (*Colonel Buchan*), Valentine Dyal (*O'Toole*), Carole Mowlem (*Fiona*), Tom Owen (*Bill*), Adrian Wright (*Mike*).

Designer: John Dilly

Producer: Chris McMaster

29th April 1970

EPISODE 1: NOT IN JEST by Bryan Cooper

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Jeremy Anthony (*Kewble*), Frank George (*Irving*), Howard Rawlinson (*Garrick*), Aubrey Woods (*Barton*).

Gas cylinders hidden in theatrical baggage. An old stage hand who is not what he seems. A sword fight which becomes the real thing. Bill and Mike are faced with these situations when they join the O'Toole Theatrical Company.

Broadcast: 1720 - 1730

6th May 1970

EPISODE 2: A THING LIKE DEATH by Rick Trader Witcombe

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Aubrey Woods, Howard Rawlinson, Christopher Cazenove (*Osborne*), Vanessa Miles (*Ratin*).

Colonel Buchan has discovered the secret of the gas cylinders. Mike finds himself playing a part in Shakespeare, and Fiona discovers that being Juliet is not without its perils.

Broadcast: 1720 - 1730

13th May 1970

EPISODE 3: PACKAGE DEAL by Bryan Cooper

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Howard Rawlinson, Aubrey Woods, Vanessa Miles, Christopher Cazenove, Peter Lawrence (*Ticket inspector*).

The O'Toole Company is booked for a foreign tour. But why Spartika? And why are there gas cylinders hidden in the luggage? Bill makes an unexpected trip to France, and Buchan becomes an archbishop.

Broadcast: 1720 - 1730

20th May 1970

EPISODE 4: SPARTIKA by Rick Trader Witcombe

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Peter Lawrence, Aubrey Woods, Vanessa Miles, Bruno Barnabe (*Thakos*).

Bill is trapped on the train to Spartika with a veteran actor, two conspirators and a load of gas tanks.

Broadcast: 1720 - 1730

27th May 1970

EPISODE 5: MERELY PLAYERS by Rick Trader Witcombe

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Bruno Barnabe, Aubrey Woods, Vanessa Miles, Roger Delgado (*President Kofus*), Pamela Ann Davy (*Col Aristides*).

Telephones with gas cylinders hidden inside them are being planted at strategic spots throughout Spartika. Fiona returns from the mountains with some vital information about Aristides, and Barton is in for a shock.

Broadcast: 1720 - 1730

3rd June 1970

EPISODE 6: AGINCOURT by Chris McMaster

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Aubrey Woods, Vanessa Miles, Bruno Barnabe, Roger Delgado, Pamela Ann Davy.

O'Toole is to play Henry V before the president of Spartika; Bill finds a sniper's rifle, Razza makes a 'phone call; Buchan makes plans to save the president and humax Colonel Aristides. But is he in time?

Broadcast: 1700 - 1730

10th June 1970

EPISODE 7: MICRODOT by Paul Erickson

Directed by Peter Croft

Guest Cast: Michael McStay (*Mayor O'Grady*), Bruno Barnabe, Michael Mellinger (*Alexis*) (without Valentine Dyal).

Buchan has foiled Aristides' plan to seize power in Spartika, but Aristides and her confederate, Colonel Thakos, are still at large.

Broadcast: 1700 - 1730

17th June 1970

EPISODE 8: KYTHERA! by Paul Erickson

Directed by Peter Croft

Guest Cast: Michael McStay, Michael Mellinger, Bruno Barnabe, Pamela Ann Davy (without Valentine Dyal).

The secret of the holy picture is unravelled. Aristides and Thakos have the clue to where a deadly weapon is hidden, and set out to find it. But Colonel Buchan is not far behind.

Broadcast: 1700 - 1730

24th June 1970

EPISODE 9: THE DICTATOR by Paul Erickson

Directed by Peter Croft

Guest Cast: Michael McStay, Pamela Ann Davy, Bruno Barnabe,

Laurence Harrington (General Voronov) [without Valentine Dyal] Thrakos plans a daring impersonation. A flight of helicopters vanishes and Aristides and Thrakos enter the neighbouring country of Zagora and meet its forbidding ruler, General Alexei Voronov. Broadcast: 1720 - 1750

1st July 1970

EPISODE 10: PETROV by Paul Erickson

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Michael McStay, Bruno Barnabe, Pamela Ann Davy, Laurence Harrington [without Valentine Dyal] Buchan adopts a new disguise and enters Zagora to find that Aristides' secret weapon, Inferno, is about to be tested. Broadcast: 1720 - 1750

8th July 1970 [postponed to 15th July 1970 some regions]

EPISODE 11: DECOY by Keith Miles

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Pamela Ann Davy, Laurence Harrington, Bruno Barnabe, Michael McStay [without Valentine Dyal]. Buchan drives a wedge between Voronov and Aristides. But can he prevent them from using Inferno? The world's oil resources face a deadly menace. Broadcast: 1720 - 1750

15th July 1970 [postponed to 17th July 1970 some regions]

EPISODE 12: FIRING SQUAD by Keith Miles

Directed by Peter Croft

Guest Cast: Bruno Barnabe, Michael McStay, Pamela Ann Davy, Laurence Harrington [without Valentine Dyal]. Buchan finds his way to Aristides' base at Varna. Meanwhile, Mike is in deadly danger. Major O'Grady calls the RAF in, but finds he has acted too late. Broadcast: 1720 - 1750

22nd July 1970

EPISODE 13: EXPLOSION by Keith Miles

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Michael McStay, Pamela Ann Davy, Laurence Harrington, Bruno Barnabe [without Valentine Dyal]. Buchan's presence as Colonel Petrov is shattered, and he has to take an appalling risk. The armies of Spirtika and Zagora advance against Varna, but will they be in time to prevent Inferno being activated? Broadcast: 1720 - 1750

SEASON FIVE

Regular Cast:

Eric Flynn (Major Graham), Richard Shaw (Ryan), Michael Ripper (Burke) with Wendy Padbury (Sue), John Calcutt (Max), Adrian Wright (Mike).

Designer: John Dilly

Producer: Chris McMaster

20th January 1971

EPISODE 1: SNIPER! by Richard Montez

Directed by Peter Croft

Guest Cast: Eric Dodson (Craig), Richard Montez (Montero). The gang find themselves involved with racing cars. A new accelerator has to be tested, but it's top secret. News of it must on no account leak. A security agent doubles as a racing driver to test the device and Max and Mike get jobs as pit mechanics to keep a close watch. But these desperate men are determined to sabotage the car. Broadcast: 1715 - 1745

27th January 1971

EPISODE 2: SPIN OFF by Richard Montez

Directed by Peter Croft

Guest Cast: Eric Dodson, Richard Montez. A milk lorry runs through the quiet English countryside, scattering charms and spilling gallons of milk. On board, Mike and Max are in deadly peril. Can they escape their pursuers? Meanwhile, secret agent Major Graham is preparing his very special racing car for

another Formula 3 event. But waged against him is the sinister South American ace Cesare Montero - his deadly rival. Broadcast: 1715 - 1745

3rd February 1971

EPISODE 3: THE MILL by Richard Montez

Directed by Peter Croft

Guest Cast: Eric Dodson, Richard Montez, Clive Cames (Rodriguez).

Major Graham is racing at Thruxton, and for the second time Ryan and Burke fix things so that he has an accident and they capture his car. But Graham is ready for them, and when they search for the secret power pack they are disappointed. Ryan and Burke retaliate by breaking into Graham's HQ. Broadcast: 1715 - 1745

10th February 1971

EPISODE 4: BLACKMAIL by Richard Montez

Directed by Peter Croft

Guest Cast: Eric Dodson.

Ryan and Burke break into Major Graham's office and knock out Professor Craig. But when they deliver their stolen accelerator documents to the boss, Montero, he discovers they only have half the secret. Broadcast: 1715 - 1745

17th February 1971

EPISODE 5: ZUKOV By Richard Montez

Directed by Peter Croft

Guest Cast: Eric Dodson, Richard Montez.

Montero and his gang hold Sue hostage in an effort to make Craig reveal the secret formula of the power pack which drives Graham's car. Graham and Craig outwit Ryan and Burke and Sue is reunited with her father, Craig. But the villains set a lethal trap for Graham. Broadcast: 1715 - 1745

24th February 1971

EPISODE 6: RUSSIAN ROULETTE by Richard Montez

Directed by Peter Croft

Guest Cast: Eric Dodson, Richard Montez.

Major Graham disappears so Craig, Sue and the boys try to trace him. Clues lead to south coast yachting marines. There is a fight aboard Montero's motor cruiser and Graham is rescued. However, Ryan and Burke strike back and this time Sue is trapped. Broadcast: 1715 - 1745

3rd March 1971

EPISODE 7: DESTRUCT by Richard Montez

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Richard Montez, Eric Dodson, Clive Cames.

The villains steal the wrong racing car, Graham retrieves the vital equations and sends them to Craig. But he is captured by Montero and Co. at his headquarters. They now have Craig and the secret power pack and make for the airport. Time is running out for pursuers Graham and Sue, but they are hot on the trail. Broadcast: 1715 - 1745

10th March 1971

EPISODE 8: ZYTON! by Paul Erickson

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Clive Cames.

Despite the fact that Burke is in prison, the villains gain the upper hand. Ryan is still at large and completely outwits Graham. The gang hold Mike prisoner and go to work on a new plan to destroy Graham and threaten the whole nation. Broadcast: 1715 - 1745

17th March 1971

EPISODE 9: ENTOMBED by Paul Erickson

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Roy McReady (Stav).

Trying to discover their opponents' plans, the youngsters look for clues in an abandoned vehicle and a gas pipeline project. Graham and Sue return from their part of the operation. But Mike and Max?

Broadcast: 1715 - 1745

30th March 1971

EPISODE 10: ROLL UP by Paul Erickson

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Clive Cazes.

Graham and Sue arrive just in time to rescue Max and Mike from being buried in a pipe which Ryan and his gang intend should be their graves. Undaunted, the youngsters pursue the villains through a circuit of fun fairs, but Sue is captured again.

Broadcast: 1715 - 1745

31st March 1971

EPISODE 11: BOOBY TRAP by Paul Erickson

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Julian Barnes (*Chris*), Clive Cazes.

Major Graham sends his men on a search of the gas works complex to find the time bombs that Ryan's gang have planted. Should the bombs detonate, they will trigger off a series of explosions ...

Broadcast: 1715 - 1745

7th April 1971

EPISODE 12: PIPELINE by Paul Erickson

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Frederick Peasley (*Professor Dawson*), Clive Cazes. Max and Mike shadow Burke to a secret pumping centre concealed beneath a stately home. They decide to remove a sample of Zytol, the deadly explosive that the gang is planning to introduce into Britain's natural gas system. Major Graham is still seeking the mysterious Kinchenko who appears to be directing the saboteurs.

Broadcast: 1715 - 1745

14th April 1971

EPISODE 13: THE ANSWER by Paul Erickson

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Clive Cazes, Frederick Peasley, Julian Barnes.

Sue and Mike succeed in getting a sample of the deadly Zytol explosive for Professor Dawson to analyse. Kinchenko's ultimatum is fast running out and he holds Graham and Max prisoner on the lighthouse. But they escape ...

Broadcast: 1715 - 1745

SEASON SIX

Regular Cast:

Ronald Leigh-Hunt (*Colonel Buchan*), Richard Shaw (*Ryan*), Michael Ripper (*Burke*), Jerome Willis (*Professor Nero*), Kevin Stoney (*Commander Calne*) with Wendy Padbury (*Sue*), Adrian Wright (*Mike*), Leonard Gregory (*Steve*).

Designer: John Dilly

Producer: Chris McMaster

N.B. This season was only partially networked. Main dates as given for ATV and Thames. Alternative shown in brackets.

27th September 1971

EPISODE 1: NERO by Paul Erickson

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: [without Kevin Stoney]

Sue and Mike are giving chase to escaped criminals Dermot Ryan and Cassius Burke when they have a roadway encounter with Steve, and his one-man car. The three youngsters spend a day at the seaside and encounter an eccentric old sailor, as well as seeing Ryan and Burke arrested by the police. The two criminals find themselves employed by the brilliant Professor Nero who has decided to steal six million pounds worth of gold from a sea ferry.

Broadcast: 1720 - 1750

4th October 1971

EPISODE 2: OPERATION SEAGULL by Paul Erickson

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Jenny Till (*Dr. Jo Bell*) [without Kevin Stoney]

Despite Sue, Mike and Steve taking jobs on the ferry, Dragon, Nero's plan to knock out the crew with gas succeeds. Ryan and Burke deliver the six million in gold bullion to their boss, Nero -

or Professor John Barnes. But they are unaware that Mike and Steve are tailing them and have a clue which helps Colonel Buchan to discover Nero's hideout and infiltrate it disguised as an American tourist.

Broadcast: 1720 - 1750

11th October 1971

EPISODE 3: MEDUSA by Paul Erickson

Directed by Dave Heather

Guest Cast: Lawrence James (*Sqdr. Ldr. Prowse*), Jenny Till [without Kevin Stoney]

Mike and Steve arrive at an air display and are ordered by Buchan to join the flying club and watch Ryan and Burke who are involved in operations. Meanwhile, Buchan continues his investigations into Nero's previous research programme - the development of Medusa, an atomic means of stimulating plankton growth which the government refused to fund. Learning about the Achilles Club of eminent scientists, Buchan follows the Club to Paris ...

Broadcast: 1720 - 1750

22nd October 1971 [or 18th October 1971]

EPISODE 4: MAYDAY by Paul Erickson

Directed by Dave Heather

Guest Cast: Jenny Till, Mike Lewin (*Colin Barr*) [without Kevin Stoney]

Steve and Sue escape from an air battle, but Ryan and Burke are not so lucky. In the meantime, Colonel Buchan and Dr Bell have returned from Paris. Sue is then dispatched by Buchan on a journey to find the fifty scientists kidnapped in Paris - and arrives at the lighthouse on Badnick Island. The boys are sent to follow Ryan and Burke and join the training ship 'Malcolm Miller'.

Broadcast: 1720 - 1750

29th October 1971 [or 25th October 1971]

EPISODE 5: PIRATES by Paul Erickson

Directed by Dave Heather

Guest Cast: Jenny Till, Mike Lewin, Edward Evans (*Captain*) [without Kevin Stoney]

The sailing ship 'Malcolm Miller' with Mike and Steve on board is hi-jacked at sea by Ryan and Burke and taken to Nero's secret



Jenny Till as Doctor Jo Bell, Colonel Buchan's assistant in Season Six

base. Sue and Barr find their way to the base where Nero has put the scientists to work building a full scale Medusa. Barr is shot, and Sue is captured, then tied up on the beach and left to drown.
Broadcast: 1720 - 1750

5th November 1971 [or 1st November 1971]

EPISODE 6: THE THREAT by Paul Erickson

Directed by Dave Hewitt

Guest Cast: Mike Lewis, Simon Caff (*Dr. McCabe*), Jenny Till [without Kevin Stoney]

Mike and Steve escape from the 'Malcolm Miller' and swim ashore to rescue Sue and Barr. They set off for help in their small dinghy. Nero moves towards his master plan's conclusion: unless all countries disarm their weapons, Medusa will stimulate plankton growth to an extent that all the oxygen will be removed from the Earth's atmosphere in months.

Broadcast: 1720 - 1750

12th November 1971 [or 8th November 1971]

EPISODE 7: DOOMSDAY by Paul Erickson

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Jenny Till, Simon Caff, Edward Evans [without Kevin Stoney]

Nero is on the verge of implementing his devilish plan, whilst Ryan and Burke decide to make off with what remains of the gold bullion. The mad professor decides that he will release Medusa into the sea, and tells the scientists that in two years Perseus will destroy Medusa and make Earth habitable again.

Broadcast: 1720 - 1750

19th November 1971 [or 15th November 1971]

EPISODE 8: BLACK BOX by Richard Montez

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: [without Jerome Willis]

Burke and Ryan escaped in their yacht when the Medusa Base blew up. At the same time they captured Mike and Steve, who tried to stop them. Buchan and Sue get on the trail but Mike and Steve manage to get ashore and run into a retired sailor turned writer, Commander Cairne, who helps them. When Ryan and Burke catch up, they get a nasty surprise.

Broadcast: 1720 - 1750

26th November 1971 [or 22nd November 1971]

EPISODE 9: CYPHER by Richard Montez

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Ronald Adam (*Prof. Goetz*) [without Jerome Willis]

While Buchan and Sue work on the meaning of the code found in the little black box, Cairne sends Ryan and Burke to get back Nero's cypher which holds the key to the money from the gold robbery. Steve discovers to his cost which side Commander Cairne is really on when he visits the writer's cottage and is captured - Cairne being Nero's contact man and the only person who can decipher the code.

Broadcast: 1720 - 1750

3rd December 1971 [or 29th November 1971]

EPISODE 10: THE PARCEL by Richard Montez

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: [without Jerome Willis]

Mike and Sue set off to rescue Steve who is a prisoner on Ryan and Burke's boat, the *Arcturus*. When they eventually return to Buchan's headquarters they are able to help him work out the sinister influence Cairne has on the two villains Cairne - really Donovan, a con man and semi smuggler - suspects that Buchan is catching up with him, and lays a booby trap at his cottage.

Broadcast: 1720 - 1750

10th December 1971 [or 6th December 1971]

EPISODE 11: THE RACE by Richard Montez

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Tom Van Beek (*Van Helzing*), Arnold Diamond (*Capt. Ryland*), David Jarrett (*Conservator*), Jeremy Anthony (*Street*) [without Jerome Willis]

On the track of Ryan and Burke, Mike and Sue find themselves in the middle of a yacht race to Holland. The criminals are part of the British Television camera crew, and are smuggling the gold on board the *Argos*. Cairne arranges for one crate of gold to be



Wendy Padbury poses for a photograph whilst aboard the *Malcolm Miller*

discovered by Buchan as part of Operation Red Herring, but Mike and Sue spot Ryan and Burke and follow them.

Broadcast: 1720 - 1750

17th December 1971 [or 13th December 1971]

EPISODE 12: RED HERRING by Richard Montez

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Arnold Diamond, Tom Van Beek, Jeremy Anthony, John Swandells (*Customs Officer*) [without Jerome Willis]

Buchan finds that his car has been sabotaged when he recovers it from Van Helzing. The Colonel is then stopped at customs when they find gold parts inserted into his car after a tip-off. Mike and Sue get on Ryan and Burke's trail again and overhear Cairne's plan at a remote windmill.

Broadcast: 1720 - 1750

20th December 1971

EPISODE 13: PAY OFF by Richard Montez

Directed by Chris McMaster

Thanks to Sail Training Association, Trinity House Lighthouse Service, Southampton College of Technology, RAF Air-Sea Rescue. The People of the Netherlands.

Guest Cast: John Swandells, David Jarrett [without Jerome Willis]

Having fooled Buchan that the gold is being sent back to England as components for a car, Cairne and his accomplices decide to get into operation their real plan. Mike and Sue battle to disrupt the television transmissions from the race and alert the authorities, as Buchan and Steve hurry to their aid.

Broadcast: 1720 - 1750

SEASON SEVEN

Regular Cast:

Ray Armstrong (*Colin*), Michael Barrington (*General Grant*), Wanda Moore (*Helga Lindstrom*), Donald Morley (*Morris*), John Glyn-Jones (*McTurky*), with Adrian Wright (*Mike*), Leonard Gregory (*Steve*), Caroline Ellis (*Jill*), Katrina Greenland (*Eva*).

Designer: John Dilly.

Producer: Chris McMaster

4th September 1972

EPISODE 1: TRAITOR! by Ralph Wright

Directed by Dave Heather

Guest Cast: Gerald Heinz (*Prof. Kirov*), John Croft (*Capt. Abbott*) [without John Glyn-Jones, Wanda Moore, Katarina Granlund].
An Eastern scientist, Professor Kirov, plans to defect to the west with a dangerous secret. When Kirov vanishes, Colin Wade of MI5 finds himself branded as a traitor. Meanwhile, Jill and Steve are working at General Grant's stables whilst Mike works for a man called Morris at a haulage firm. It is Grant and Morris who have kidnapped Kirov ...
Broadcast: 1625 - 1655



Mike (Adrian Wright) calls base whilst flying a plane in Season Six

11th September 1972

EPISODE 2: THE RACE by Ralph Wright

Directed by Dave Heather

Guest Cast: Gerald Heinz [without John Glyn-Jones, Wanda Moore, Katarina Granlund].
Colin Wade is on the run and exhausted, trying to rescue Kirov and prove his innocence. Now he has found allies in Jill, Mike and Steve. Kirov has developed Scorpio, which projects a ray that can pacify or render unconscious. Grant and Morris use this to fix horse races and convince Kirov they are using the winnings to develop Scorpio as a weapon of peace.
Broadcast: 1625 - 1655

18th September 1972

EPISODE 3: FRAMED! by Ralph Wright

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Gerald Heinz, John Rees (*Dowd*) [without John Glyn-Jones, Wanda Moore, Katarina Granlund].
While Mike watches Morris collect vast winnings at the races, Jill takes part in a steeple chase and has a fall. Colin finds out that General Grant has had Scorpio placed in his binoculars, and Kirov has now perfected a new version that will attack the blood stream.
Broadcast: 1625 - 1655

25th September 1972

EPISODE 4: VERTIGO! by Ralph Wright

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Gerald Heinz [without John Glyn-Jones, Wanda Moore, Katarina Granlund].
Colin, Steve and Jill carry out a daring raid on MI5 in a bid to get vital information about Grant. Meanwhile, Grant, finding that his Scorpio device has been stolen, immediately sets up a booby trap to get Colin and the youngsters. Mike finds that weapons are being transported to Grant's secret HQ at Kirkmaulie castle.
Broadcast: 1625 - 1655

2nd October 1972

EPISODE 5: THE KNOT by Ralph Wright

Directed by Dave Heather

Guest Cast: Gerald Heinz, Edward Underdown (*Major Cole*) [without John Glyn-Jones, Wanda Moore, Katarina Granlund].
Jill and Mike are trying to figure out the meaning of General Grant's appearance in command of the Cavalier Sealed Knot Army when Steve brings the news of Colin's capture. Rescuing Colin successfully from Grant's collar the trio infiltrate the army in civil war costume. Colin discovers Grant was in charge of a disastrous operation in the Korean War.
Broadcast: 1625 - 1655

9th October 1972

EPISODE 6: THE WAR GAME by Ralph Wright

Directed by Dave Heather

Guest Cast: Edward Underdown, Gerald Heinz [without John Glyn-Jones, Wanda Moore, Katarina Granlund].
Mike, Steve and Jill realise that General Grant is using his Cavaliers and Roundheads to fight out a more modern conflict as a war game, and a 'phone call to Major Cole reveals that Grant aims to have them re-enact the Korean battle. Cole's men besiege Kirkmaulie, but Grant threatens to use his larger version of Scorpio unless Cole presses home his attack on the castle ...
Broadcast: 1625 - 1655

16th October 1972

EPISODE 7: HELGA! by Ralph Wright

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Gerald Heinz, Edward Underdown [without John Glyn-Jones, Katarina Granlund].
General Grant's plan to force the British Government to play his war game by paralysing London with Scorpio is foiled by Colin and the youngsters. Scorpio self destructs, destroying the castle and Grant is captured. Colin is captured by Morris and flown to Sweden to meet the wealthy industrialist, Helga Lindstrom. Jill, injured, is left behind as Mike and Steve go after him ...
Broadcast: 1625 - 1655

23rd October 1972

EPISODE 8: HELGA! by Peter Lover

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: [without Michael Barrington, Caroline Ellis].
Colin is offered a job by the beautiful and wealthy Helga, which he accepts to find out more about her. Helga aims to acquire a new process to smelt ore underground. Steve and Mike arrive in Sweden to join up with Eva, a Swedish girl who takes them on an alarming boat ride which has an astonishing outcome ...
[N.B. The fact that both these episodes share the same title is a mistake at production stage]
Broadcast: 1625 - 1655

30th October 1972

EPISODE 9: MIDSUMMER by Peter Lover

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Rolf Söhlman (*Lars*) [without Michael Barrington, Caroline Ellis].
Youngsters from all over the world have now arrived in Sweden to work for Helga at her compound. They are to take part in an archaeological dig at Otter's Grave - a dig that Colin finds very suspicious, when McClusky proves that a tenth century dagger they have unearthed is a fake. Helga arranges for the teenagers to visit a fair in Stockholm, where Mike and Eva disappear ...
Broadcast: 1625 - 1655

6th November 1972

EPISODE 10: THE MINE by Peter Lover

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Per-Axel Aronson (*Dr. Hjalmar*) [without Michael Barrington, Caroline Ellis].
Helga discovers that Mike has joined Steve and Eva, whom she has taken hostage. She puts him to work with the others in a lumber camp which she has set up to get pit props. Colin realises all the teenagers at the camp are children of nuclear scientists whom Helga has blackmailed into working for her. When he persuades Helga by helicopter his craft goes out of control over the Baltic Sea ...
Broadcast: 1625 - 1655

13th November 1972

EPISODE 11: TRICKED! by Peter Lover

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Tord Peterson (*Nala*) [without Michael Barrington, Caroline Ellis]

Helga lets McClusky go when she finds out he has taken Dr. Hjalmur's place. Unknown to McClusky, she has planted a bug on him so she can hear all he and Colin plan. When Colin plans to rescue Mike and Eva from the lumber camp, Helga knows what to expect ...

Broadcast: 1625 - 1655

20th November 1972

EPISODE 12: ARES! by Peter Lover

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Tord Peterson, Willy Peters (*Ektaron*) [without Michael Barrington, Caroline Ellis]

Testing tests on Ares, an atomic powered mining device, the mine is attacked by a helicopter armed with Scorpion, and Helga and Morris steal Ares. Helga tests its power in one of her own mines, the first stage of her plan to destroy all other mines and become mistress of the world's minerals.

Broadcast: 1625 - 1655

27th November 1972

EPISODE 13: ARCHIMEDES by Peter Lover

Thanks to Southampton Fire Brigade, Royal Green Jackets, Southampton College of Technology, The Joe Lyndhurst Collection, The Sealed Knot, Southampton Docks Board, The People of Sweden

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Rolf Söhlman, Tord Peterson [without Michael Barrington, Caroline Ellis]

Helga instructs Morris to keep a watch on her fishing fleet which is carrying the secret weapon Ares. The tension mounts as McClusky, Steve and Eva race to stop Helga in McClusky's old van, Archimedes. Mike frees the teenagers for an assault on the fishing boats and Colin meet Helga face to face in her HQ.

Broadcast: 1625 - 1655



Frontiersmen, J.K. (Caroline Ellis), Steve (Leonard Gregory) and Mike (Adrian Wright) infiltrate General Gault's Sealed Knot during Episode 13: The Knot

SEASON EIGHT

Regular Cast:

Bernard Horsfall (*Caniffie*), Sam Kydd (*Phil*), Peter Howell (*Goddard*), Peter Myers (*Hagth*), Robert Gillespie (*Naylor*), Neil McCarthy (*Crouch*) with Wendy Padbury (*Sue*), Martin Neil (*Dave*).

Designer: John Dilly [except *Darkness at Noon to The Crypt*].
Gregory Lawson [*Darkness at Noon to The Crypt* only]

Producer: Chris McMaster

6th August 1973

EPISODE 1: CONTACT! by Ralph Wright

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Donald Bissett (*Ranford*), Bert Palmer (*Purser*), John Annett (*Hassell*) [without Bernard Horsfall, Peter Howell, Peter Myers]

Dave suspects that a bank raid he and his college friend Sue witness has something to do with his father, Phil Tyler, a man with a criminal past who now runs a legitimate garage business. The police arrest Gerald Crouch so that he can contact the disgraced scientist Doctor Hassell in prison, and make his escape by helicopter ...

Broadcast: 1650 - 1720

13th August 1973

EPISODE 2: LIBRA! by Ralph Wright

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: John Annett, David Griffin (*Dickson*) [without Peter Howell, Peter Myers]

Hassell unwittingly helps Naylor and Crouch in their daring raid on Ashurst Research Centre and steal the blueprints for his secret weapon, Libra. Dave and Sue rescue Hassell, but are then pursued by the villains in a Saracen armoured car. Rescued by the police, they meet Caniffie of Military Intelligence.

Broadcast: 1650 - 1720

20th August 1973

EPISODE 3: THE AUCTION by Ralph Wright

Directed by Bob Leng

Guest Cast: Donald Bissett, Anthony Dewes (*Auctioneer*), Alan Wilson (*Carator*) [without Bernard Horsfall, Peter Howell, Peter Myers]

Sue and her art tutor, Professor Rumford, attend an auction in London where the canvases are more valuable than the paintings. Dave confronts Phil, who is reluctantly fitting my projectiles to a fleet of tramp vans for Naylor. Naylor and Crouch visit London's National Gallery and plant Libra.

Broadcast: 1650 - 1720

3rd September 1973

EPISODE 4: THE THIRD MAN! by Ralph Wright

Directed by Bob Leng

Guest Cast: Donald Bissett [without Peter Myers]

Phil rescues Dave and Sue from the cold store, but the pair are then trapped in one of the secret compartments of the vans going to France. Meanwhile, Phil discovers that Naylor and Crouch faked the bank raid and were responsible for the events at Ashurst. But there must have been a third man involved. Croucher and Naylor report to Goddard at his chateau.

Broadcast: 1650 - 1720

10th September 1973

EPISODE 5: RAPIDS! by David Stevens

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Cyril Shaps (*Jacques*), Donald Bissett, Jenny Till (*Jachre*) [without Bernard Horsfall, Sam Kydd, Peter Myers]

Goddard unleashes Libra on the art galleries of Europe. Using Rumford's fakes, he has switched fifteen old masters - part of an experiment to recreate the artists' brain patterns. Dave and Sue are caught by Goddard, but manage to escape and find shelter with Jacques, formerly of the French Resistance. The pair are then pursued by canoe across the rapids of Ardeche ...

Broadcast: 1650 - 1720



Free-wheelers, Dave (Martin Neil) and Sue (Wendy Padbury), are captured (again) by villains Crouch (Neil McCarthy) and Naylor (Robert Gillespie)

17th September 1973

EPISODE 6: DARKNESS AT NOON by David Stevens

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Jenny Till, Cyril Shaps, Donald Bissett, Alec Bregonzi (Gaston) [without Peter Myers]

Dave and Sue set up an ambush and capture one of the ray projector vans. Jacques takes a stroll through the castle gardens and procures one of the thought pattern recorders. All three make a journey to the art gallery at Avignon where they fall victim to the effects of the Libra.

Broadcast: 1650 - 1720

24th September 1973

EPISODE 7: DOUBLE-CROSS by David Stevens

Directed by Bob Leng

Guest Cast: Cyril Shaps, Donald Bissett [without Bernard Horsfall, Sam Kydd, Peter Myers]

Goddard reveals his true plans to destroy the paintings to capture the Creative Factor, and thus make his computer superior to mankind. Runford and Sue are locked in the Tower of Death. Meanwhile, Naylor thinks up a way to double-cross Goddard - and Jacques cooks up a plan.

Broadcast: 1650 - 1720

1st October 1973

EPISODE 8: IMPASSE! by David Stevens

Directed by Bob Leng

Guest Cast: Donald Bissett, Cyril Shaps [without Bernard Horsfall, Sam Kydd, Peter Myers]

Jacques thinks up a daring plan and threatens to blow up the power generator at Goddard's Chateau unless he returns the paintings. Naylor and Crouch tip off the police to double-cross Goddard, and escape with Libra and the paintings. Goddard however has captured Dave and Sue.

Broadcast: 1650 - 1720

8th October 1973

EPISODE 9: THE CRYPT by David Stevens

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Cyril Shaps, Donald Bissett, Jenny Till [without Sam Kydd, Peter Howell, Peter Myers]

Naylor and Crouch go to ground in the crypt of a church in Ardeche to await the arrival of Xerxes T. Crump, international middle-man, to see the paintings. Cuthill arrives in France and schemes to get the pictures and blueprints back.

Broadcast: 1650 - 1720

15th October 1973

EPISODE 10: SWITCHED! by David Stevens

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Cyril Shaps, Donald Bissett [without Sam Kydd, Peter Howell]

Events in France reach a climax at Valence Airport. Cuthill outwits Naylor and Crouch, but the villains still have the blueprints and meet their new employer, Xerxes T. Crump kidnaps Dave and reveals himself as Hugh Fawell, with a plan in mind for Libra, a steam traction engine and a power house ...

Broadcast: 1650 - 1720

22nd October 1973

EPISODE 11: BREAK-UP! by Ralph Wright

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Mike Lewin (Bob) [without Peter Howell]

Events converge on a scrapyard in Birmingham. Having recovered the remaining Libra unit, Hugh makes a daring attack on Fawley power station to tap into the land lines, kidnapping Phil and Dave's brother Bob to help. Hugh's ultimate plan is to use a larger version of Libra to attack Fort Cunningham.

Broadcast: 1650 - 1720

29th October 1973

EPISODE 12: THE THINK BANK by Ralph Wright

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Mike Lewin, Reg Lye (Scuttle) [without Peter Howell]

Hugh sends Crouch and Naylor to steal a traction engine from a rally. Dave escapes from Hugh's house and visits the rally, foiling the villains' plans. A giant size Libra has been built by Hugh, with his target Britain's Think Bank at Fort Cunningham: the home of all the country's technological secrets.

Broadcast: 1650 - 1720

5th November 1973

EPISODE 13: THE HOIST! by Ralph Wright

Directed by Chris McMaster

Guest Cast: Mike Lewin, Reg Lye [without Peter Howell]

Bob has escaped from the cable site with his news about Hugh's real intentions, but falls foul of Naylor and Crouch in their stolen traction engine - which is immune to Libra's interference effects. Sue realises that she has vital information. Fort Cunningham and the Think Bank come under siege from helicopter, steam traction engine and power hoist.

Broadcast: 1650 - 1720

Southern Television (in co-production with Sveriges Radio for Season Seven only)

Sixty-Five Episodes - Colour (seasons four to eight)



The sixth season **FREEWHEELERS**: Mike (Adrian Wright), Sue (Wendy Padbury), Colonel Buchanan (Ronald Leigh-Hunt) and Steve (Leonard Gregory)



THE AVENGERS MAN

an interview with **BRIAN CLEMENS**

Conducted by
Anthony McKay and
Michael Richardson

with additional material by Michael Richardson

Where can one begin to describe the achievements and long-standing ability of master television and film writer Brian Clemens? Born in 1931, Brian's career would progress from 'wordy' BBC plays right the way through to providing the storyline for the big budget movie **HIGHLANDER 2**. However, along this path, which touches upon five different decades, he has managed to clock up credits on over forty different television series, and create a number of his own shows such as **THE NEW AVENGERS**, **THE PROFESSIONALS**, **THRILLER**, the comedy show **MY WIFE NEXT DOOR** and the European venture **BLUE BLOOD**. Without doubt though his most famous credit has to be the filmed episodes of **THE AVENGERS** with Diana Rigg and Linda Thorson, where he produced and developed one of the most popular series of all time. With the passage of time he also wrote instalments of telefantasy favourites, **H. G. WELLS' INVISIBLE MAN**, **ADAM ADAMANT LIVES!**, **THE CHAMPIONS**, **HAMMER HOUSE OF MYSTERY** AND **SUSPENSE** AND **WORLDS BEYOND**, not to mention the more mainstream action/crime shows such as **MARK SABRE**, **DANGER MAN**, **THE BARON**, **THE PERSUADERS**, **THE PROTECTORS**, **THE EXPERT**, **BERGERAC** and many others including a number of American shows. His extensive talents also took him successfully into the worlds of feature films and stage plays, though it is his television work of over two hundred episodes which makes him Britain's most prolific episodic series writer.

The obvious question to begin with was how did Brian become interested in writing, and how did he enter the worlds of television and feature film production? "I always wanted to be a writer and I wrote and illustrated my own books when I was five. Then when I was ten my father asked me what I wanted to be and when I told him a writer he bought me a typewriter on which I taught myself to type, and that's probably why I'm the fastest typist at the world. I still use an old manual model because I like to hear the keys clicking. When I was twelve I had a short story published, but then things dried up and I didn't have anything published for years. I then did a couple of years in the army doing national service and upon getting out went into advertising. Then I wrote a play for the late Dennis Vance who at that time was a kind of Orson Welles of television. This was a silent play about a murder but without any dialogue, instead the storyline would be conveyed by actions and shadows, and he wrote back saying that it was much too difficult for them to make. So he sent me down to the BBC Television Centre for a day to find out what they could make. To my surprise I found that they didn't have much money at all, so armed with that I went back and wrote another play, a



A recent photograph of Brian Clemens taken at his London flat

forty minute thriller about two men in a railway carriage, which they did. You couldn't get much cheaper than that and as a result I came to the attention of a couple of cheapo Americans, the Danziger brothers.

"I became a staff writer for the Danzigers doing a half-hour television script every week and an eighty minute feature film script every two-and-a-half weeks. Initially they did not have the finance to have sets specially made for every film, so they would visit various studios, Bray, MGM Borehamwood or Associated British Elstree, and they would go in and buy up sets which had been used for large budget movies. What used to happen is what occurred in the old Hollywood days, they would come to me and say "We need an action-packed script but it's got to have the Old Bailey, a ballroom and a submarine in it", and I had to write to those requirements. Production was done at their own studios, New Elstree, which was actually converted out of a bus garage. The pressures to turn out the material were tremendous, but after that nothing phased me and consequently years later on **THE AVENGERS** I was able to turn out work extremely fast. In a way it was a wonderful apprenticeship which was unfortunately denied to many writers and of course nowadays we don't even have a film industry any more.

"The series I wrote for back then were **MARK SABRE** which became **SABRE OF LONDON**, **WHITE HUNTER**, **THE MAN FROM INTERPOL**, and I also did some work on their swashbuckler, **RICHARD THE LIONHEART**. I did a very good

film for them called **TARNISHED HEROES** which was copied to a certain extent some years later by **THE DIRTY DOZEN**. Then I got a leave of absence to go and write a film for someone else called **MISSION TO MOROCCO**, which was shot in Madrid, and I went out there with the production crew. It was directed by Anthony Squire who is a great second unit director, he was responsible for all the aerial sequences in **THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN**. And so I sort of found myself drifting away from the Danzigers, not because they didn't want me, but because I thought I ought to be getting into something better. I'd met another writer, Ian Stuart Black, who'd got me onto H.G. WELLS' **INVISIBLE MAN** where I was put under contract for a couple of episodes, but I had to use my Tony O'Grady pseudonym as I was still under contract to the Danzigers. Whenever I used this name I was moonlighting and doing two scripts per week. In turn this led to the early half hour episodes of **DANGER MAN** where Ian was associate producer and I ended up having far more input into this and wrote quite a number of them."

Brothers Edward J. and Harry Lee Danziger specialised in inexpensively produced television series and B-movies aimed mainly towards the American market between 1957 and 1962. Despite their success at the time, the New Elstree Studios beside the M1 motorway no longer exist, with a number of small industrial units now occupying the site. There is no reference material to back up Brian's claims that he ever worked on **RICHARD THE LIONHEART**, although there is the possibility that he could have served in an uncredited capacity rewriting and/or script editing on the series.

So did all this experience crammed into several years give Brian an adequate reputation to be approached to write for **THE AVENGERS** at its beginning? "Yes, Sydney Newman, who was the drama chief at ABC Television as it was then, told me about an idea he had for a show called **THE AVENGERS**," he said. "I don't know what it meant but it's a terrific title", and so Ray Rigby and I wrote the first two episodes. Ray started it with Hot Snow and I finished it off with Brought To Book. They already had Ian Hendry from **POLICE SURGEON**, which was a dreadful show but ABC liked him and just changed the character's name. Ray and I introduced the Steed character who at that time was only in a raincoat and was a bit sleazy."

After completing another script, **One For The Mortuary**, Brian moved on again to work on several ITC film series, starting with the episode **The Bridge for Sir Francis Drake** where the commission had come from his friend Ian Stuart Black, who was again associate producer. This led to solitary scripts for **MAN OF THE WORLD** and its spin-off **THE SENTIMENTAL AGENT**, where his script **A Very Desirable Plot** would give the young Diana Rigg her first small screen appearance.

Brian then returned to **THE AVENGERS** which had undergone some radical changes in his absence, though he would soon start to influence proceedings himself. "Ian Hendry had a big success in a movie called **LIVE NOW, PAY LATER** and wanted to become a movie star, so he left and ABC were left with some scripts. They were very parsimonious and didn't want to spend any more money on new scripts, so they brought in Honor Blackman and she was told to play it like a man. The role precipitated feminism and I came back to the series just as it was hitting its peak and I wrote several episodes. I was already trying to think one step ahead with episodes like **Build A Better Mousetrap** I got on terribly well with script editor Richard Bates, who is H. E. Bates' son and the storylines began to get wilder and wilder and the show started to take on my personality. We capitalised on that when we went over into film."

But the filmed episodes of **THE AVENGERS** would not begin shooting for another eight months, giving Brian time to go and work for Lew Grade's television franchise ATV as the script editor on **G55** with his old associate Dennis Vance. "That's right, it was a continuation of **GHOST SQUAD**, and it was here that I met Ray Austin who was the stunt man on the show and I later made him stunt arranger on the filmed **AVENGERS**. He got hungry to direct and I let him do all the second unit footage for an

episode. He was very good, so he graduated up to doing complete episodes. We still keep in touch although he lives in Virginia now, and in fact he's currently in Spain working on **ZORRO**."

Also during this period Brian returned briefly to ABC to pen an episode of their short-lived crime series **THE PROTECTORS** which was headed by ex-Jet Morgan, Andrew Faulds, who would later go onto become an M.P. However, this was once again credited to the O'Grady name as Brian was obviously still under contract to ATV, though once free of this he wasted no time in visiting Associated Rediffusion where he co-wrote the pilot episode of their up-market continental thriller **RIVIERA POLICE** with the show's producer Jordan Lawrence.

So was it a choice between continuing to be a freelance writer or producing **THE AVENGERS** on film? "Well I was just a jobbing writer and I had no ambitions to produce or direct, as I later did on my film **CAPTAIN KRONOS**, until the opportunity arose to do **THE AVENGERS**. ABC decided they would make a film series out of it and sell it to America who had declined to take the Blackman episodes. This was a very courageous move because if you were to do it nowadays you would have to get American interest and backing first. They planned twenty-six episodes without any American involvement, although by the time we had made thirteen they had a deal for a network transmission. But in this way **THE AVENGERS** was free from interference, if the Americans had been involved up-front then I'm sure they wouldn't have had Patrick Macnee as the type, who, even at that point, was getting a little plump and wasn't the typical hero type. How I came to do it was the people in control wanted someone who knew about film, knew about television and knew **THE AVENGERS**, and I was uniquely qualified as there was no one else in the world. So initially I became script editor and associate producer."

Could Brian relate how the actress Elizabeth Shepherd came to be cast as the original Mrs Emma Peel, and does this footage still exist? "It was a group decision between Julian Winkle, Albert Fennell and myself to cast Elizabeth Shepherd. We had screen-tested her and thought she was right. She looked great, however, until you get someone working alongside the other artists you can never be a hundred per cent sure. We shot **The Town Of No Return** and a chunk of **The Murder Market** when we discovered that she had an attitude problem, or rather her husband did as he spent every night rewriting her script. When you're producing a television series which just eats up the time you do not have time for performers rewriting their lines. I would accept input, such as someone suggesting it would be better to do it this way rather than that way, but she had this attitude which was being forced onto her by her husband. Plus she had absolutely no sense of humour either so we stopped production and tested again. This time it came down to Diana Rigg and Moira Redman, and I'll be honest here and say that at the time I would have preferred Moira Redman. Diana got it as she was a virtual unknown, and she went onto great success in the part. As for the Liz Shepherd footage, I'm sure it still exists, if only in negative form somewhere in Weinsteub Entertainment's vaults."

With it being the beginning of production, **The Town Of No Return** had location footage shot in Norfolk, whilst many of the later episodes were confined to the Hertsmere district and a radius of ten miles from Associated British Elstree Studios where the series interiors were filmed. "We used Lord Aldenham's estate a lot and the Haberdashier's Schools, and the pubs I remember are **The Battlemere** which was nearby and **The Three Horseshoes** at Leichamore Heath. And then there was the British Rail apprentices place at Walford where they used to teach signalmen. The **Positive Negative Man** had some stuff done there. For **The Town Of No Return** we went somewhere near Crozer, you went through a wood and you were straight down to the beach, and the deserted RAF base was within ten miles. We'd always have to get permission for location shooting and we'd have a location manager who would be working weeks in advance to find us these places. He would be employed by us as opposed to Elstree Studios or ABC Television, and would be hired basically on his experience. We didn't use the same-one all the time, there was



THE AVENGERS spawned many items of merchandise including this LP the cover of which features Patrick Macnee and Diana Rigg at Beaulieu

Richard Dalton, Ted Lloyd, Ron Parkey who we also used on THE NEW AVENGERS, and Albert's son Robert Fennell. Their duties sort of overlapped; not only did they find locations, but he would be there as filming took place to make sure everything ran smoothly and stay around when we had finished to make sure all the walls were rebuilt and the paintings were restored."

So with THE AVENGERS taking this new and untrod direction how did Brian assemble his writing force, and did he ever accept scripts from unknown writers? "They were a mixture of people I found and people who had written on the video-taped shows. I won't mention names but I had approaches from some of Britain's finest playwrights to work on the series and they just didn't make it. It wasn't because I didn't want them to, at the time I was really up against it trying to find scripts which would fit the format. Personally I didn't want to write as many as I did and there's a patch at the beginning of the black and whites where I don't write any for quite some time. This is because I was busy commissioning scripts which either didn't turn up or needed totally rewriting, although if I did this I would never steal the credit, though there are some where I did that much that I would give myself a fifty percent credit. At that time we were working on a five to four ratio, commissioning five scripts and get four useable ones and have the funds to be able to write one off."

Writers, John Kruse, who worked on the video-taped instalments of THE AVENGERS and was a regular contributor to THE SAINT, and Martin Woodhouse (writer of A Sense Of History) are known to have submitted scripts for this season, but were rejected as being unworkable for the series.

Were writers briefed on what kind of storylines were required? "Well, a writer would come into the office with an idea and we'd talk and storyboard it through, and as we went I would be typing a rough outline. By the end I would have three or four pages of major points, which might include pieces of amusing dialogue and I would give him a copy of this. I always worked on the principle that if he gets knocked down by a bus on the way out I can always write it myself. If I was talking to a good writer like Dennis Spooner, who I had a rapport with, all I'd have to say is "It's like BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI", and he'd instantly know what I meant. There were rules, like there are no policemen or the killing of females in THE AVENGERS, but it was never written down, it was all here in my head. I knew instinctively about a plotline, if someone came to me saying they had a great story about the cap final, I'd automatically say no. Or even jewel thieves, I'd say no. But if he said it's about a man who's obsessed

by humble bees, I'd say, "Yes, now you're on the right track!"

One of the stalwarts Brian could always rely on to provide suitable storylines was the late Philip Levene, creator of the Cybernauts, who contributed nineteen scripts covering all of the filmed seasons. "When I was setting up THE AVENGERS I was interviewing a lot of writers and I remember driving home late one night after a day of this and there was this play on the radio. It was part of a series which was something like ONE STEP BEYOND and it ran maybe fifteen-twenty minutes and it was so good that I thought this is the kind of writer I want for THE AVENGERS. So I contacted this writer who turned out to be Philip Levene, whose name I'd heard mentioned in connection with a very good science fiction radio play. He was a good writer and I don't wish to diminish his contribution because his storylines were good, but all his scripts were rewritten. He had really wonderful plots but no sense of humour; if he invented a joke he would tell you it about fifty times because it was such a rare occurrence. He was a very solitary man who would go and lock himself away to write. He'd been an actor and appears in Who's Who??? and had been in a long-running play called *Reluctant Heroes*. He was a nice man, but strange. He always wore black and had a very pale complexion making him look like a young Bela Lugosi."

Was the idea of Steed's vintage Bentley and Mrs Peel's sleek Lotus Elan S2 sports car part of Brian's plan to give the show more style? "Yes, we negotiated with Lotus for the use of the Elan and they later told us the association with us was worth five million dollars to them and really sold the car for them in America. It wasn't always reliable as it occasionally broke down, and it had vacuum operated pop-up headlights that would tend to desop as you drove faster, and when you were doing one hundred and twenty miles per hour at night you suddenly had no lights! Lotus were very good to us and when we did THE NEW AVENGERS they wanted to supply us again, but at that time we needed to deal with a company who could provide three different cars for the leads and various vans and trucks. So we did a deal with British Leyland which cost us money as their cars were prone to break down. We wanted a British feel to it and utilized the Union Jack quite a bit, so we also had to turn down both Honda and Toyota who were begging to supply in favour of Leyland who were British. But they treated us dreadfully, and couldn't or wouldn't supply duplicate vehicles, hence we had to scour the land to hire cars to match up from previous shots."

The first time Brian came to use the beige MGB convertible as driven in the series by Joanna Lumley it was after a day's shooting at Pinewood. But due to an oversight at the factory the gear knob fitted was from another model, and after half an hour of attempting to select reverse gear, Brian had no other choice than to call a cab. Apparently the lever should have been pushed one way instead of being pulled the other.

So if finding writers who could provide scripts with the correct ingredients was a problem, was it as difficult to select directors? "No, the choice of directors was made between Albert and myself. Before THE AVENGERS I didn't really know any of the directors we used. I knew of their work and was pleased that we could get them. Robert Fuest had been a designer on the video-taped shows but I didn't get to know him until he started directing for us. Roy Baker I admired very much. Then there was Charlie Crockett, and Sidney Hayers, who was a friend of Albert's, and is still the best editor in the business. He went to the USA because there just isn't the work here. We didn't have problems with directors very often, though on *The Winged Avenger* we sacked Peter Duffell and replaced him with Gordon Flemyng. It wasn't anything to do with him being a bad director, he just wasn't an AVENGERS director."

Could Brian tell us something about *The Case Of The Missing Corpse*, the colour mini-episode (un-screened in Britain) shot on the set of the last monochrome episode in production, *Honey For The Prince*? "It was a promotional film to show American viewers what the show would be like in colour."

With the great success of the monochrome episodes of **THE AVENGERS** behind him, Brian moved on between seasons to do other work. "I did a rather good film called **THE PEKING MEDALLION** which was a German co-production starring Robert Stack and Elke Sommer. It was directed by James Hill who I'd used on **THE AVENGERS**, and filmed in peninsular and re-titled to **THE CORRUPT ONES** for the American market. Then a friend of mine, Tony Williamson, got me onto **ADAM ADAMANT LIVES!** and I did one of those. I had a really good story idea but I became busy and couldn't write the script, so Tony bought the idea from me and he wrote it. Then he devised a series called **INTRIGUE**, which was about industrial spies. Again I did just the one, but the Island Revenue began investigating me over a because they found money coming out of ABC Television and couldn't find where I had declared it, although I had. They were putting my accountant under some pressure and I titled the episode **Take The Money And Shut Up**, and then everything was sorted out and I let him get his own back by informing them of the title. After this I returned to Elstree and wrote a couple of episodes for Terry Nation when he was script supervisor on **THE BARON**. These were more Tony O'Grady credits and this is where I first met Tony. Doing these other series was quite nice, like a tennis player having a round of golf."

Now back at Associated British Elstree Studios, Brian would commence work in September 1966 on what is considered by many as the finest era of **THE AVENGERS**, the Diana Rigg colour adventures. Some elements pioneered in the previous season would be expanded upon whilst others would be changed. "We felt we had to move on from the leather gear, I mean everything gets a bit dated after a while. Plus the fact that there's so little you can do with leather. I mean it looks good when it's tight but there's not much you can do with it design-wise. It was a sod to light and we'd have to keep putting powder on it to stop the glare, and anyway by now Di was installed as a tough-lady. The double-barrelled sub-titles such as "*Steve is shot full of holes - Emma sees stars*", were all done by me except Phil Levene's scripts where he did like to do his own. The "*Mrs Peel we're needed*", intros were all mine as well. The gun and rose design I stole from a documentary that James Hill did called **CUBA SEA**, which was about Castro. There's this one image I remember, outside Castro's palace on a hot day. There was this guard dozing in the sun, holding his rifle and it had a rose sticking out of it. And I thought "*How bizarre!*", but then again Jimmy's that sort of guy; quirky, strange, and that's why he was so good on **THE AVENGERS**."

Are the reports that Diana Rigg and to a lesser extent Patrick Macnee rewrote and ad-libbed many of their lines true? "No, perhaps one line in a while. Occasionally there would be uproar on the set and I'd be sent for from the office and Di or someone would be questioning a line and so I'd just reiterate it off the top of my head and things would carry on. But you never let actors write, perhaps a writer has spent four hours on that line and an actor wants to change it in four seconds, without any thought as to what it's going to do three scenes away. This rewriting thing comes from Pat Macnee, who talks about it in interviews. They might like to think they rewrite, but they didn't."

The majority of the colour Rigg instalments would be written by Brian and Philip Levene as less effort was made to groom new writers to the series. Obviously it was proving easier to write episodes himself than constantly rewrite and use up the budget buying in scripts which would not come up to the high standard required. "The **Living Dead**, I had to rewrite extensively. The impressive underground city was achieved mainly with a matte painting. Then there was **The Bird Who Knew Too Much**, which was another I had to do a lot on. This was by Alan Pattillo who was an editor with Gerry Anderson and he had progressed up to writing episodes of **STINGRAY** and **THUNDERBIRDS**. Then I did a major rewrite on Roger Marshall's **A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Station**, and he didn't like the end product. He insisted that his name be removed from the credits, and so I put the pen-name Bryan Sherriff on it. Bryan for me and Sherriff as another word for Marshall, and Roger never

worked on the show again. There was Dead Man's Treasure by Michael Winder who never wrote us another one, but he didn't really write that one! Everything at that episode was done by me, all that was left of Michael Winder's original is the idea of having a car rally car treasure hunt. He went to the States, but to work there you have to be in the guild, and I am, and I got the yearly booklet with all the writers' names in it and he's not there. So he's either retired or passed away. If you remember Valerie Van Oot from that episode, she's still in the business, as an agent now."

Besides being upset over his script **A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Station**, it is known that Roger Marshall was also unhappy about rewriting his season two Blackman script, **Death Of A Great Dane**, as **The £50,000 Breakfast**. Brian himself reworked three of his Blackman stories: **Dressed To Kill** as **The Superlative Seven**, **The Charmers As The Corrupt Way To Kill** and **Don't Look Behind You As The Joker**, although the basic premise of this had already been reworked into **The House That Jack Built** in the previous season. "Not having taken the Blackmans the Americans hadn't had a chance to see these, and they were so good we thought we'd do them again. I'm not sure but **THE AVENGERS** plotlines could subconsciously surface again on other shows. There are only ten basic plots anyway and it's just the way you adapt them."

Over the years quite a number of Brian's plotlines have resurfaced and been given a slightly different angle. The opening of his **DANGER MAN** episode **The Girl In The Pink Pyjamas** with the young woman found wandering in a dazed condition as used in **Bizarre** and again in the **Blackout** segment of **THE PROFESSIONALS**. His **ADAM ADAMANT LIVES!** script **The Terribly Happy Embalmers** also bears a resemblance to **Bizarre**. The concept of drug induced memory loss is reworked from **THE BARON**, **The Maze** for the Thomson instalment **Requiem** and again for **THE PROTECTORS** story **Thinkback**. **THE NEW AVENGERS** episode **Sleeper** gives an outing for the large deserted area storyline as witnessed earlier in **The Morning After**.

Was Brian aware of the series' success? "Oh yes, and the trouble with being a success was that ABC wanted a success every week. What we prayed for was a pre-empt, something like the World Cup so they would drop us for a week and give production a chance to catch up. We used to overrun regularly in episode production but it didn't matter as long as we had one ready every three weeks. Having a second unit made things easier, this was just a cameraman and a director and they would do establishing shots and pick-ups. Various executives at ABC questioned what we were doing but at the end of the day we always came in on budget. The episode **Who's Who???**, which I devised with Philip Levene, was made because Pat was ill and Di desperately needed a holiday, so we had Freddie Jones and Patricia Haines play them. Then the solo episodes like **The House That Jack Built**, **The Joker** and **The Superlative Seven** came about for the same reason, because one of the leads needed a break. Whilst production was under way Albert and I never got a break."

However filmed television production at Elstree was not always a serious subject. "Not when Roger Moore was there. He was a tremendous practical joker and was always costing the production of **THE SAINT** money as having to re-shoot, much to Bob (Robert S.) Baker's dismay. I remember once we had Diana Rigg searching a room, and she had to find the clue in this coffin and she slowly opened it up and suddenly Roger sat up and went **ARGH!** She jumped back and it ruined the whole take. But he did things like that, if he got bored he would wander all over the place. We fooled him one day. He was doing a scene where he had to search a room, and in every drawer he opened, we had left a snutty message which got worse as he went along. By the time he reached the seventh draw he couldn't hold it any longer, and he just cracked up."

Does Brian still keep in touch with the production people who worked on **THE AVENGERS**? "Oh yes, well those who are still alive. Some of the greats of the British film industry worked on



Richard Berman (William Gaunt) **THE CHAMPIONS** episode Astérix

the show, and they were in their fifties and sixties when they made **THE AVENGERS**. Bob Jones, was quite old; a wonderful designer who did all the colour Riggs and had worked with Roger Corman on **MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH**. The cameraman, Gil Taylor, he is still around; Alan Helme, he was with us for a long time. They're the kind of people I still keep in touch with. Roy Austin I see when I can. Sidney Hayers I saw recently. Robert Day I haven't seen for ages, he was a good friend, but he lives in California now and we never re-established contact. Charlie Crichton, I still write and talk to from time to time. Roy Baker, I haven't seen for a long time but I follow his career, he must be in his seventies now. He directed Marilyn Monroe in **The Fifties** and I've seen his name on episodes of **MINDER**."

There seems to be various versions of what happened between the Dennis Riggs colour episodes and the beginning of the final season with Linda Thorson. If anyone knows the true story it has to be Brian. "Albert and I were fired off the series. There was a lot of jealousy at ABC and a number of executives who thought it was a simple task to make **THE AVENGERS**. So Albert went off to grow roses and I moved across the hallway to write a couple of episodes of **THE CHAMPIONS** for Dennis Spooner. It was funny really because from here I could watch the edifice coming down. John Bryce, who had been producer on the video-taped series, was put in charge and it wasn't long before he was across asking me to write for the show, to which I said "I can't leave as the producer and come back as a writer." Where's John Bryce nowadays? Then I set off on a much needed holiday touring Wales in November and at every hotel I arrived at there was a message from ABC. So eventually I called them up and they said "We'd like you to come back", and I said "I'm not coming back without Albert", and they agreed on that, so we went back. That was on the Thursday and I wrote **The Forget-Me-Knot** on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, and began shooting it Monday morning. I decided that we needed a cross-over episode and Di agreed to come back to hand over to Linda."

"I would never have cast Linda Thorson; she was too young and fresh out of drama school, but she was John Bryce's girlfriend... need I say more! Tara, that's a ridiculous name! Anyway when Albert and I got back we found that we really had to pick up the

pieces. The crew were filming a episode. The Great Great Britain Crime, which I stopped in its tracks. Bryce had been in charge six weeks and they had made three terrible episodes. **Invitation To A Killing** I ended up rewriting about half of and tried to use as much footage as I could that was already in the can, and sometimes it shows. **The Great Great Britain Crime** was awful and I worked that into **Homicide And Old Lace** where it wasn't much better. I wrote all the new dialogues for **Homicide And Old Lace**. And then there was **Invasion Of The Earthmen**. I didn't do much to that except a few inserts. It's more or less as they made it though I never liked it. It wasn't quirky enough and didn't have **THE AVENGERS** slant on science fiction. When we got back, both Julian Wintle and Philip Levene were gone. I know they're both credited on some episodes. With Julian he had just about reached executive level by then so had a piece of the action, so to speak. Philip had been working on a script with John Bryce and kept ringing me up to ask my opinions, but after a while I pointed out that I really shouldn't be commenting on it as I was no longer on the show and he resented that. If he was still there he didn't stay for long, and together with Julian and Sid Hayers he went to ITC to do several movies of the week."

Philip Levene, Julian Wintle and Sidney Hayers collaborated on a couple of films for ITC, **MISTER JERICHO** starring Patrick Macnee and **THE FIRECHASERS**, on which Laurie Johnson provided the music. Both were pilots for potential series which would have been made if a more positive response from the United States had been received. Levene and Hayers worked together again in 1974 on the thriller **DEADLY STRANGERS** and once more a couple of years later on the Sibouette film production **DIAGNOSIS MURDER**, with Laurie Johnson once again handling the musical side of things.

How did Brian cope with the introduction of Tara? "Before the end of the Riggs we knew Di was leaving and the powers that be did consider killing Emma Peel off, which is something I'm against in any series, because what you get is an episode which all the fans absolutely loathe. Hence, **The Forget-Me-Knot**, which was far better than the Bryce pilot, **The Great Great Britain Crime**, which was being directed by Vernon Sewell, who is a very old fashioned director. And Ray Austin had an uncredited hand in the newly filmed material, although other people were in there as well. So I was having to redefine the show as we went. The Bentley had disappeared, so I brought it back and gave Linda the AC sports car although she didn't drive it as she hadn't passed her test at that point. After a while we returned the AC and negotiated with Lotus for a new Europa, which I ran-in until she passed her driving test. Then we had Mother played by Patrick Newell, because Linda couldn't carry much comedy and I needed someone to share jokes with Pat."

Was it now a case of putting together a new team of writers, and were there similar amounts of rewriting to be undertaken? "Some writers never understood **THE AVENGERS** and this did cause a lot of rewrites. There's only one Terry Nation script that I didn't have to do something on, everything else had at least some lines of dialogue altered. What happened with Terry Nation was that I brought him onto the show as the script editor. He had invented the Daleks, written on **THE BARON**, **THE SAINT**, **THE CHAMPIONS** and **DEPARTMENT 8** and was quite an important writer. He did **Noon Doomsday**, which incidentally was shot on the films where I live, and it was a send-up of **HIGH NOON**. I totally rewrote this and he'd never had that experience before. In fact I gave him something of a rocketing, saying that if there was anyone whose work I shouldn't be rewriting, then as script editor it was his. So the next one he tried harder and gave me **Legacy Of Death** which was a send-up of **THE MALTESE FALCON** and I didn't have to do a thing on that."

"I had to do a lot of rewriting on Richard Harris' **The Interrogators**. The phone box with the false back which is really a secret door into Mother's HQ was mine, and all the guys getting beaten up during their interrogation and then sluting the superior officer, was also mine. The episode **Killer** was written for Linda but she went away on holiday and we brought in a temporary replacement in Jennifer Croxon. It has been suggested that had

We went on to another season she would have taken over from Linda, but she just wasn't good enough. She was only a guest star and we couldn't have developed her character into Steed's permanent partner. There was no Cyberrats story because we'd had two and Philip had already gone."

Is there any truth to the rumour that Dennis Spooner had an uncredited hand in the writing of the episode *Split*? "Could be, by that name Dennis and I were very close friends. We met through Tony Williamson, who invited me to a DOCTOR WHO taping. Being the story editor, Dennis was there in the box and we had an instant rapport. Then he turned up across the way doing THE CHAMPIONS, DEPARTMENT S and RANDALL AND HOPKIRK (DECEASED) but we never got to really collaborate on a series until THE NEW AVENGERS. Till the moment he died from the time when we first met I would never write anything without talking to him about it first, and vice-versa. He was a dear man, I miss him a lot. At that time between the mid-Sixties and the early Seventies all the episodic film series in this country were being written by about eight writers. I was one of them, and there was Tony Williamson, Donald James, Philip Levine, Dennis Spooner, Terry Nation and maybe a couple of others, and we'd say to one of them "Can you do us a quick script?" We tended to lean on each other."

THE AVENGERS never utilized the Elstree backlot anywhere near as much as the various ITC film series in production at the same studios. "No we didn't use it much, in fact in *Killer* we used it as a studio backlot where agents go to meet a contact. THE AVENGERS never went for reality, we were not into trying to make the backlot look like the south of France which they were doing every week on THE CHAMPIONS and THE SAINT."

Brian encountered some censorship problems in the final season of THE AVENGERS. "My Wildest Dream disturbed someone up there at the censor's office. They thought it was too violent, but to this day I don't know why. We had episodes which I considered to be much more violent. We'd already had problems with *A Touch of Brimstone*, it was alright for Peter Wyngarde to whip Di, but not the other way around. I mean it was an excellent episode but we ended up cutting out three cracks of the whip. They still wouldn't transmit it in the States, it was banned! By the time we got to THE PROFESSIONALS there was so much money tied up in the show that we used to submit scripts to the censor first and alter anything they didn't like. But there was a cock-up with *Klansman* because at this instance they came back to us after we'd cut and dubbed everything, complaining about the racist elements, and it was just too late. Personally I don't see what the trouble was and it's freely shown in other countries like Australia and the USA without any bother. All censorship is subjective."

If this is so then what were Brian's views about his violent and bloody episode, *Autokill*, of THE CHAMPIONS? "I don't remember it being violent, although I haven't seen it since initial transmission. Whenever I'm asked to write on a series I always try to find its weak underbelly, where to attack. I thought of these people as physically superior to humans, then what would happen if they fought each other? But I had nothing to do with the production-side of THE CHAMPIONS, except write the episodes. I did get to see the other one recently, *Happening*, and thought it stood up well."

After THE AVENGERS ceased production Brian and Albert Fennell formed their own production company Cruel Productions, and hired office space at what had become EMI Elstree Studios. The office itself was furnished with furniture used in Steed's and Tara's apartments and props such as *The Destruction Of Mrs Emma Peel* clapperboard from the episode *Epic*. From here Cruel would produce three films starting with AND SOON THE DARKNESS written by Brian and Terry Nation. An unrealised project was Brian's hope to make a film, HOT COLD, WARM AIR based on the book *The Magflower*. "We wanted Oliver Reed as the lead and Ken Russell was interested in directing it. I stayed with him a while to discuss the project, but it didn't come to anything."

Brian then provided the script for the Hollywood thriller BLIND TERROR (US: SEE NO EVIL) starring Mia Farrow as a blind girl who slowly realises that there is a homicidal maniac on the loose in a large house killing all her family. "I just wrote it un-commissioned, not knowing who would buy it. Originally I called it BUFF, but that was changed. It was one of the best things I've ever written and it was shot exactly as I wrote it."

The following year Cruel made two horror films at Elstree for Hammer Films. DR. JEKYLL AND SISTER HYDE and CAPTAIN KRONOS - VAMPIRE HUNTER, which was originally intended as the first of many. "We hoped so, but Hammer went broke shortly after that, and their kind of film was going out of favour anyway. It has a great cult following in the USA in all those rather weird video guides and it is also well reviewed in *Time Out*. I've had nibbles about it being revived as a television series but nothing ever came of it. But at one time somebody was interested in doing a musical version of DR. JEKYLL AND SISTER HYDE."

Was Brian involved with THE AVENGERS stage play from the outset? "No, what happened was I devised the plot but due to other commitments I couldn't do the script so dramatist Terence Feely who had worked on some of the video-taped episodes of THE AVENGERS wrote the script around my plotline. He is the opposite from Philip Levine, he's good on dialogue but very poor on action and plot. But it was very ambitious for a stageplay, as ambitious as *'Miss Saigon'* is today. There was a helicopter and Steed's Bentley on stage, and Simon Oates was very good playing Steed. I wanted Simon for CAPTAIN KRONOS but Hammer wouldn't entertain that. They said he looked like a stunt man. But I always thought he had rather nice style and we used him in *The Bird Who Knew Too Much* and *Super Secret Cypher Snatch*. He directed a couple of my plays and he's a very funny man, he does a stand-up comedy routine. As for the play it ran at the Prince Of Wales theatre for about four weeks."

In the meantime Brian had not been neglecting his television work and would spend the next couple of years concentrating his efforts exclusively on ITC film series. "Terry Nation got me onto THE PERSUADERS. The concept had already been set up and they asked me to do the pilot (*Overture*), so really it was my script that initially got them working together and that set the style of the show. I never visited the set though I did meet Tony Curtis a couple of times and liked him, and I already knew Roger Moore from Elstree. On the strength of the pilot I got to write another couple. Then it was THE PROTECTORS for Gerry Anderson, although I didn't want to work on any of his puppet shows or SPACE: 1999. And after that Dennis wanted a script for THE ADVENTURER, so I did one."

Brian then devised a new anthology series designed to fill an eighty minute time slot, which became known as THRILLER (US: MENACE) and approached Lew Grade with the concept. He liked the idea and departed to the United States to find a buyer. "I was very proud of some of those, *Coffin For The Bride* with Helen Mirren was super, and *Nurse Will Make It Better* with Diana Dors was another good one. A lot of people liked them. Lew came back from the States and said, "I've got a deal for five, can you write five." So I wrote five very quickly and he sold them, and as soon as they saw them they wanted another five and we carried on like that in small batches. They were all recorded at ATV television studios across the road from where we'd done THE AVENGERS, at what is now BBC Elstree. They had about two or three minutes of filmed location and everything else was on video-tape shot over about three days, with around ten days for rehearsals. I don't know why but later Lew had new opening titles put on them, which are awful. Apparently this was for the American market, which I fail to understand because they had already seen them. Maybe it still sells in America, I wouldn't know. I sold out all my interests in it some years ago. I made a good deal, took the money and ran."

By late 1973 Brian had become involved in something completely different: THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD, a British movie which utilized the extensive talents of Ray Harryhausen



Joanna Lumley as Purdy in *THE NEW AVENGERS* poses for a photograph

and his stop-motion "Dynamation" wizardry. This turned out as an Arabian Nights-type adventure starring unknown John Philip Law as Sinbad, ably backed by Tom Baker, Douglas Wilmer and Caroline Munro. Brian co-wrote the original storyline and went on to turn it into the finished screenplay.

Then a further complete change of direction Brian devised a situation-comedy named *MY WIFE NEXT DOOR* for the BBC. "I like writing comedies, it's just that people don't ask me to because I've got this image associated with *THE AVENGERS* and the like. A long time ago I wrote a children's series, *MASK OF THE CLOWN*, I've done *LOVE STORY*, *ARMCHAIR THEATRE*, plays, wordy plays, so I've worked in most of the mediums and I just had this idea for a sitcom. But again I was too busy to actually do it so I got in touch with Richard Waring whose forte was sitcoms. I contributed the storylines and he wrote the scripts. The BBC bought it and we made two seasons and won a BAFTA award. There would have been more and a film, but John Alderton was being a typical actor. He didn't want this and he didn't want that and so it didn't happen."

After this Brian would undertake more work for the BBC, writing on the *QUILLER* series, based on the novels by Adam Hall, and the pathologist crime detection favourite *THE EXPERT*. "I don't remember too much about *QUILLER* apart from they were pretty terrible. They wanted me to write a South American episode which they said would be shot over there and that I could go along for the shoot. So I wrote it and nothing happened, so I rang them up one day and they informed that it was in production. And I asked where and they replied, Hastings. When I saw it on TV it looked like bloody Hastings! I liked the books, and the series could have been good. But they didn't put any money into it, hence it didn't get made well enough to sell abroad and Michael Jayston wasn't a star anyway. With *THE EXPERT* someone I knew at the BBC asked me to do it and it starred Marius Goring who had been in my *LOVE STORY* in the early Seventies and so I did it."

Could Brian go into detail about his connections with the Terry Nation series *SURVIVORS*? "When Terry and I were working together on the last season of *THE AVENGERS* I outlined a series called *THE SURVIVORS* which was about the Holocaust. The idea was to make twenty-six and if the series was a hit we would have the regulars find a plane and they would all get on it and we would fly it over to Quinn Martin in the States and they could carry on over there. Time went by and suddenly I saw it being done on the BBC by Terry Nation and I was a bit pissed off. I didn't mind him stealing the idea but he still called it *SURVIVORS*. I went to law about it and hired a solicitor, which forced Terry to do the same, and what happened then was that we made these two solicitors very rich. Then after a while my solicitor advised me that it was unlikely that I would win and to continue would only cost more money, so I proceeded no further."

"We lost touch and Terry went to California as a production consultant. Once when we were working together he had told me that his ambition was to become an executive producer so he wouldn't have to work any more, and in a way he achieved that, though nowadays I don't see any credits for him on anything. Though in saying that, you live very well in the States writing things which never got made. I've written several movies of the week which haven't been made. I wrote a script for a remake of a film, *STOLEN FACE*, and was disappointed when it got no further."

Brian and Albert Pennell always hoped to revive *THE AVENGERS* one day, and that opportunity arose in 1975 when French television executive Rudolph Redfi discovered that the series was no longer in production. He gained enough investment to make a new series a viable proposition, while Brian together with Albert and Laurie Johnson formed *The Avengers (Film & TV) Enterprises Ltd* to produce what would become *THE NEW AVENGERS*. "It was originally supposed to be French financed, but then they had to take on Canadian money, and they were told you can only have more money if you make three in France and four in Canada. Canada is the worst place to shoot anything, it's such an empty sort of nothing. I'd have rather shot them in Los Angeles, which at least has an identity but Canada always looks like Milton Keynes with snow. There were some good scripts on *THE NEW AVENGERS*, even some of the Canadian ones were excellent. We got off to a good start going off to Scotland and using Eilean Donnan Castle. It was great to be writing for Steed again and *The Eagle's Nest* was the first to be written and shot."

So really the continuity of *THE NEW AVENGERS* was ruined by having to produce episodes in foreign countries? "Oh yes. *THE NEW AVENGERS* was killed by the financing. The French didn't come up with all the promised money and they ended up owing Albert and I the cost of an episode, so in that way they got one for free. The motto from all this has to be never work with the French production companies, they're all crooks and vagabonds! They are the sort of people who get arrested for painting bricks gold! When it went to Canada I didn't go. Albert went, the leads and the scripts went and it effectively became a Canadian production. They took over and it shows. It also didn't help that the show didn't sell onto the American network until we were in real financial difficulties, and it certainly didn't help that the IBA wouldn't network it over here."

Can he remember any of the other performers considered for the roles of Steed's partners? "Oliver Cotton, Lewis Collins, Dana Quack, Gabrielle Drake. I interviewed about one hundred and forty women to start with and narrowed it down to about thirty who actually read for me, and down again to ten and then a dozen. Same with the men, there were a lot of unknowns and people I hadn't heard of before. Joanna thought of the name Purdy as I had christened her Charley, but we couldn't use that as there was a perfume, Charley on the market at the time. Then she just stuck us with that bobbed hairstyle, arrived back one day with it, but that's an actress for you."

"Dennis and I did two scripts together and how this happened was I was writing *Three Handed Game* and he was doing *Faces* and we both got stuck at halfway. I'm always looking for ways to

make things happier so we swapped and finished off each other's scripts. For purely financial reasons we were based at Pinewood Studios this time instead of Elstree, but I had worked there in the past when studio space wasn't available for **THE AVENGERS**. We did both **The Fear Merchants** and **Escape In Time** at Pinewood."

However, despite the demise of **THE NEW AVENGERS**, The Avengers (Film & TV) Enterprises Ltd, or Avengers Mark One Productions as they became known were far from finished and would soon find themselves engaged in producing another popular action-packed film series. "I went to Brian Tester at London Weekend Television and said, 'Let us do a series for you', and he replied that if we could come up with a good format he would sanction it. In the event I came up with two, one about undercover police officers and another about an specialist anti-terrorist unit which I called **THE A-SQUAD**. They liked the second one but changed the name to **THE PROFESSIONALS**. It was always going to be shot out on location on 16mm film in the style set by **THE SWEENEY**. We started off with Martin Shaw and Anthony Andrews and realised we'd made a mistake right away. All they did was giggle at each other. So we got rid of Anthony Andrews and recast Lewis Collins as Bodie and then it worked. We carried on for a time with British Leyland providing the cars, but quickly changed onto Ford, although we were not really bothered what sort of cars they drove, it wasn't really that sort of a show."

"Sid Haynes was producer on the first season. He didn't get fired, he was only ever going to do the first batch and LWT brought Raymond Menzies in and he took the series into areas where I wouldn't have. But then again my whole idea about **THE PROFESSIONALS** was to set it up, get it running and walk away from it, so I generated it but I couldn't complain about where it was going. As executive producer I could do as much or as little as I wanted to. I wrote the first episode in production, **Old Dog With New Tricks**. I never thought the ending was right though LWT said it was fine. But then after a rethink they decided it wasn't, and brought Gerry O'Hara in to rewrite it and it was shot. Then after another rethink they decided it still wasn't right and it was rewritten and reshot again."



Tough guy Mike Gambill (Carriv Hunt) in **Dirtee By The Dozen**

"As the executive producer I vetoed all the scripts and for the second batch they sent me one called **Not A Very Civil, Civil Servant**. I read it twice and still didn't know what it was about. So I strongly advised against making it, but they didn't want to buy another script and went ahead. Then sometime later I saw it and turned it off half way through because I couldn't follow the plot and in that situation it just becomes boring. Some of **THE PROFESSIONALS** scripts were too complicated for their own good. I always write for a lay audience and if you put in too much technical jargon you lose people and they won't understand or enjoy it. No matter what the subject I write it first and look up the facts later and nine times out of ten I'm right. Philip Levine used to do it the other way and he loved to research something and then write it."

"We wanted to make a major movie of **THE PROFESSIONALS** which would have sold the series onto the American network. We had already sold onto cable and this movie could have got us the network. But Martin Shaw wanted script approval and there was no way I was going to give an actor script approval. Both Martin and Lewis have faded away somewhat, but if we had made the movie they would have had world-wide exposure and gone onto bigger things."

No sooner was **THE PROFESSIONALS** under way than Brian was hired to assist in the launch and control of an American version of **THE AVENGERS**. "Quinn Martin approached me to do an **AVENGERS**-type show in San Francisco which they wanted to call **THE AVENGERS U.S.A.**, but due to copyright reasons this had to change to **ESCAPADE**. They wanted me both as producer and as a writer, but I didn't have the input I would have liked. I arrived with the pilot script **I Think It Was Someone I Know** and found that they had already cast the two leads; Granville Van Dusen and Morgan Fairchild and both were unsuitable. On the strength of the first one which they liked I was then commissioned to write a second one, **Illusion**, which never got made. The first one was shot but it didn't work and I think the problem was in the casting. I'd have liked to have seen it develop into a series and could have easily been the producer and still continued as executive producer on **THE PROFESSIONALS**. **ESCAPADE** has been transmitted twice on BBC2 during the Eighties."

Over the years there have been numerous rumours regarding the revival of **THE AVENGERS** both as a film and as a television series. Could Brian enlighten us about unused scripts? "Dennis and I wrote a script for a TV movie in 1980 for CBS and we were paid but for some reason it never got made. It was going to be more in the style of **THE AVENGERS**, rather than **THE NEW AVENGERS** and shot here in Britain rather than in the USA. It was about a man with an army of ants and we wanted John Cleese to be in it as a expert in militarization and someone living in an hot air balloon so the ants cannot get him. Then in 1985 Taft Entertainment commissioned me to write another one, **Reincarnation**, which was to be the pilot of a new series, **THE AVENGERS INTERNATIONAL**. Again I got paid but it all depended on the show being picked up by an American network and that didn't happen. Michael Grade was in there and he was interested in the project before he left to join the BBC. I wouldn't mind doing **THE AVENGERS** again as a movie or as a series."

Over the next few years Brian continued writing for both film and television, though he would find himself having to work in the United States more and more. "I did an episode of **DARKROOM**, a horror anthology series with James Coburn as the host. It's a format that I love, in fact one that all writers love because there are no regular characters and that makes it far easier to write. Then I did the Disney film, **WATCHER IN THE WOODS**, but they had someone rewrite it and then someone else rewrite it again, and then they reshot the ending. After that I did a **BERGERAC**, but only as a favour to Bob Banks Stewart. I don't really like the show. The BBC always seem to go out of their way to make something dull, slow and boring, instead of fast and exciting. Their opinion seems to be, 'We must not do that, it's too exciting, people might want to watch it!' **BERGERAC** is slow."

From here Brian had another chance to indulge in the anthology medium with **HAMMER HOUSE OF MYSTERY AND SUSPENSE** [US: **FOX MYSTERY THEATRE**]. "I had two accepted and made though I submitted more (including **River of Diamonds**). Then there was a couple of scripts for **REMMINGTON STEELE**, which was a very **AVENGERS**-ish sort of show." Returning to these shores Brian adapted Gavin Lyall's best seller **THE SECRET SERVANT** as a three part thriller for the BBC. "It wasn't bad, and it was quite nice to work from a novel which is something I don't often get the chance to do, and it was nice not to have to do that up-front thinking. It's owned by Turners now who acquired it along with everything else when they bought up RKO. Apparently the BBC sold it to them after the repeat screenings. In fact I had to sign a re-release form just the other day so Turners obviously plan to re-screen it somewhere. I also worked on another anthology series **WORLDS BEYOND**. It was a new production company and I thought there's a good chance that they would close down after production and I won't get any repeat fees, so I did an all-in-deal for payment."

Another successful project was Brian's adaptation of Ray Brown's unpublished novel *"The Type"* as a TV movie, **TIMESTALKERS**. "It was a movie of the week and it was very good. There was William Devane, Klaus Kinski and it was Forest Tucker's final film. It was a time scale film similar in some ways to **BACK TO THE FUTURE**, only done before."

In 1969 Brian's German venture **BLUE BLOOD** was scheduled to appear on British television. Obviously somewhere along the way things had gone wrong. "**BLUE BLOOD** got made, and LWT had an interest in showing it, but I'm not surprised it hasn't been transmitted here because the production values were so shoddy. I devised the series about a European baron who discovers he's virtually broke and drifts into becoming a detective. It was a bit like **THE SAINT**, a fast-moving action series, and I wrote some episodes and when they left me they were mini-masterpieces. Sidney Hayers did some, but Telemunch didn't do it well enough. It didn't fail because of lack of money, it failed because nobody cared. They were dubbed into various languages and for some episodes they used the same voice-over artists to voice eight different characters. Just dreadful!"

With the reluctance of British companies to invest in film series was the approach from the American company **Viacom** welcomed? "Certainly, they called me in to work on a show called **MAX MUNRO - LOOSE CANNON**. The network had agreed to take a pilot and six episodes, but the plots were confusing and the narrative very weak. The leading man Sheridan Stephens was starting to have some impact, though they didn't use him in the right way. When I got there they had the pilot and one script, and I wrote a couple and gave them some ideas, and was given the credit executive script consultant, whatever that means. It looked like a **MIAMI VICE** sort of show, but the ideas seemed to have been nicked from the film **LETHAL WEAPON**, and they didn't steal the best elements. Really, it just did not work and failed to attract ratings."

"Through doing this **Viacom** asked me to work on another show, **FATHER DOWLING INVESTIGATES**, where they had the old problem every show faces after a time. They had run out of ideas and had another thirteen episodes to make, so I gave them twelve plots and wrote four of them myself and got my executive script consultant credit again. Unfortunately after four years on the network the show was cancelled late 1991, but if it had gone on I would have been producing and writing a two hour **FATHER DOWLING INVESTIGATES** special in Rome."

So will Brian be working in the United States now more and more? "Well actually less and less happily because when I did **MAX MUNRO - LOOSE CANNON** I was out there in an hotel. I had my own secretary provided and a large car and my very own parking space and I only went to the studios occasionally. When I did **FATHER DOWLING INVESTIGATES** I never went there at all. Not even to deliver a script. I just faxed it through, although I was just down the road. Gradually someone realised that if I

could sit in a room and fax it in, then the room might as well be in Britain. Since then I have written three **PERRY MASON** episodes from here."

Having such a solid and massive output over the years there must have been scripts and series proposals which have failed to see the light of day? "The BBC commissioned and were going to go ahead with a psychic detective series, but I cannot see that happening now after **MOON AND SON**. LWT were going to do a series about a guy who is out of work who moonlights as a detective called **CAPTAIN MOONLIGHT**, and that might still happen. There have been several like that, Dennis and I wrote a pilot called **WHAT A TURN OUT** with Anton Rodgers for ATV which was like a **COMEDY PLAYHOUSE**. It got tremendous reviews at the time but never went to a series. Roy Skeggs phoned me and said he was setting up another **HAMMER HOUSE OF HORROR**. I submitted sixteen storylines and he liked them all, but I never heard any more about them. Obviously the backing didn't materialize. I would like to write a **HAGGARD**, and then again I've got two story ideas that would make good **DOCTOR WHO** and wouldn't really fit anything else."

What is Brian's favourite sort of television from a watching viewpoint? "I like the original **STAR TREK**, the very early episodes of **KOJAK**, an American series which wasn't shown much over here called **LAW AND ORDER**. **THE TWILIGHT ZONE**, **ONE STEP BEYOND**, **THE PHIL SILVERS SHOW**, **ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS**. I suppose I'd better choose a British one, **TAGGART**, which is one of the few things I try to stay in to watch, I might sometimes look at dear old George Baker in **THE RUTH RENDELL MYSTERIES**. With **INSPECTOR MORSE** I don't understand all the adulation at all. John Thaw wanders through it all looking like John Thaw. It's slow and boring. He just mumbles something about real life and everyone says "Look at the depth of character!""

It came as no surprise that during his extensive career that has covered so many different series Brian has had to turn work down on various occasions. "Yes, as I've already mentioned, **ADAM ADAMANT LIVES!**, **MY WIFE NEXT DOOR** and **THE AVENGERS** stageplay. They wanted me to work on **THE SAINT** but I was too busy with **THE AVENGERS**. I was asked to write on **MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE** when Cedric Francis and Ivan Goff came over here because they had run out of writers, but again I couldn't do anything as I was currently employed. But I would have liked to have written for that show. Then I had a chance to do a **COLUMBO** but turned it down after I was told you have to go to Peter Falk's house in Malibu for three days while he questions you all about the script. I'm a bit anti-actor, so I did a **PERRY MASON** instead."

Brian has strong opinions when he came to discuss Weintraub's proposed feature film version of **THE AVENGERS** which has been in the air now for at least a couple of years. "I don't think the Americans are capable of doing it, at least not how it should be done. They have tried doing **THE AVENGERS** before as I've said, with **ESCAPADE**, **REMMINGTON STEELE** and **A MAN CALLED SLOAN** and other productions, and they're just too literal and can't quite get that feel. I know they have a script by Sam Haman which is supposed to be the first meeting of Steed and Mrs Peel. I hated his **BATMAN** script. It was very downbeat and Freudian, looking for things which I don't think are in the comic strip. **BATMAN** is just a bloke in a cape my kids like!"

"I know Michael Sloan wanted to lease the rights and do it again as a TV series, **THE AVENGING ANGEL**, but I think he was just stabbing in the dark. He's a great **AVENGERS** fan I've worked with him in the past, and he revived **THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E.** as a TV movie with Pat which Ray Austin directed. So he's sitting in Universal Studios now trying to dream up which other old series he can get the rights to. **THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E.** used to pinch ideas from **THE AVENGERS** anyway, and although it was stylish it was very formatted and lacked charm, and curiously enough I think it has dated very badly, whereas **THE AVENGERS** doesn't seem to date."

With the amount of Nazi and ex-Nazi villains that constantly cropped up in British film series, had it ever been suggested that they shouldn't be used as often? "Never, in fact I'm informed that if you write a novel and have a swastika on the cover you're sure of a quarter of a million sales up front. I really like Germans as villains because they're all sort of Anton Diefing and they keep threatening you with what's in the back room, although the viewer never sees the back room. And they're nice and polite about it. "Go on have another schnapps", I like villains like that. In **THE AVENGERS** we used to have priests and workmen who were villains and it would be both amusing and sinister at the same time."

It was then that Brian gave his opinions regarding the long-running debate of **THE AVENGERS** ever being available on sell-through video. "It's criminal that it's not available, ridiculous, but I've given up trying to get the show on video. I have offered to sort out the prints and clearances for Weintraub but they're just not interested. What you need is a petition of about three thousand signatures and present it to them. What really annoys me is when you go into a video store in the States, there they all are lined up on the shelf. They're pirated, but what the hell, it's no back street operation over there. I'm not annoyed because they're pirated, I'm annoyed because Weintraub won't make the effort."

Has Brian any hobbies besides writing? "I've always been a movie man, I watched two yesterday. I read, such as the Gavin Lyall book I did. I've just read a book about the Mafia being lawyers in the USA called *The Firm*. I like Mafia things and intrigue." Has he favourites from his own writings? "Obviously **BLIND TERROR**, for which I won an Edgar Allen Poe Award, some instalments of **THRILLER**. Some of the best things I ever did were on **THE AVENGERS** like *The House That Jack Built*, although it took forever to make, about twenty-eight days to complete and we were supposed to do them in ten. Way back I won another Edgar Allen Poe Award for *Scene Of The Crime* which was an episode of **US STEEL HOUR**, a very prestigious one hour presentation usually with a solitary commercial break. Out of my plays, *INSIDE JOB* and one I wrote with Dennis, *WILL YOU STILL LOVE ME IN THE MORNING*", which ran for a couple of years in Germany. It's never been done here but I'm hoping to get a production of it off the ground quite soon."

"I've been very lucky having the early experience with the **Dangers** and then getting onto shows like **THE AVENGERS**. We don't have an industry now. What was Associated British Elstree has in the main been demolished and my office has gone! The BBC has training systems but I'm suspicious of their motives. Any company who can initiate a series about a district nurse in a Welsh mining village 1924 has got to be pretty suspect. They must have spent as much on an episode of that as it cost to do an episode of **KOJAK**. One day when the licence fee reaches £1,000 a year someone in authority might just decide that the BBC should be more accountable to the licence payers."

Is Brian currently working on any new projects that he could tell us about? "Well I've just finished a two hour **PERRY MASON** TV movie and started a new series with Dick Van Dyke for Vincom, and when that's out of the way composer Don Black is interested in me doing a stageplay. Then there's **MEMORANDUM OPERANDI** which is a romantic thriller I'm trying to sell at the moment. I've been commissioned to write an outer space series and set it up which has the working title of **CYBER FORCE**. I've a film script called **THE GUNNOR** which is about east end gangsters and the producers love it but are having problems raising the finance. I write quite a lot of material unsolicited and I've always got twenty projects on the go at any one time which gives me a twenty to one chance of getting some work."

My sincerest thanks must go to Brian Clemens for his hospitality and giving up a whole day in his busy schedule to meet us in busy London town. "Hope the Mercedes is running well, Brian". Plus thanks to Vanessa M. Bergman for starting the ball rolling and Genevieve Bassett for his efforts on my behalf. M. Richardson

BRIAN CLEMENS - BRITISH TV ADVENTURE AND THRILLER CREDITS

Compiled by Michael Richardson

MARK SABER - Season Two: **Danger**

Writer:	
Cage Of Fear	23.09.58
Return To Danger	03.10.58
Bulldoz For Sabre	07.10.58
Cry Wolf	10.10.58
The Very Last Witness	14.10.58
Corpse With A Sword	17.10.58
The Wrong Face	06.11.58
Backtrack To Murder	13.11.58
Bishops Sometimes Bite	20.11.58
A Coins Worth Of Murder	26.11.58
The Pink Scarf	27.11.58
Short, Dark And Handsome	09.12.58
The Big Snatch	12.12.58
Blood In The Sky	16.12.58
A Coffin For Johnny	19.12.58
Death Has Three Faces	01.01.59
Diamond Cut Diamond	02.01.59
A Lady Is Missing	18.02.59
Murder For Gains	25.02.59
The Night Has Secrets	26.02.59
Man Hunt	11.03.59
The Captain And The Killer	01.04.59
The Missing Hours	15.04.59
Hour Of Decision	30.04.59
Find Harry Clay	17.01.61

SABER OF LONDON - **Danger**

Writer:	
Power Of Suggestion	20.05.59
Saber's Bow And Arrow	21.05.59
Man About To Die	27.05.59
Saber At Sea	28.05.59
A Diplomatic Affair	06.11.59
Black Pawns, White Pawns	13.11.59
Death By Delayed Payment	08.01.60
The Man Who Was Twice	15.01.60

H.G. WELLS' INVISIBLE MAN - Season Two ITP/Official Films

Writer: as Tony O'Grady with Ian Stuart Black, from a story by Tony O'Grady.	
Shadow Bomb	12.12.59+
Story: Written by Ian Stuart Black, from a story by Tony O'Grady and Robert Smaet.	
The Big Plot	19.12.59+

ARMCHAIR THEATRE - Season Four: ABC

Writer:	
Nest Of Four	15.05.60+

DANGER MAN - Season One: ITC/ATV

Uncredited script editor	
Writer: with Ralph Smart	
View From The Villa	11.09.60+
The Island	01.01.61+
The Leak	28.05.61+
The Nurse	06.01.62+
Dead Man Walks	13.01.62+
Story: Written by Ian Stuart Black from a story by Brian Clemens.	
Time To Kill [US: Handcuffed]	18.09.60+
Story: Written by Ian Stuart Black and Ralph Smart from a story	

by Brian Clemens.		The House That Jack Built	05.03.66+
The Girl In The Pink Pyjamas	16.10.60+	How To Succeed... At Murder	19.03.66+
Story: Written by Jo Eisinger from a story by Brian Clemens.		Honey For The Prince	26.03.66+
The Sisters	27.11.60+		
Story: Written by Ralph Smart from a story by Brian Clemens		ADAM ADAMANT LIVES! - Season One: BBC	
Bury The Dead	07.05.61+	Writer:	
		The Terribly Happy Embalmers	04.08.66
THE AVENGERS - Season One: ABC			
Writer:		INTRIGUE - ABC	
Brought To Book	14.01.61+	Writer:	
One For The Mortuary	29.04.61+	Take The Money And Shut Up	03.12.66+
SIR FRANCIS DRAKE - ATV/ABC		THE BARON - ITC/Filmakers	
Writer:		Writer: as Tony O'Grady.	
The Bridge	11.03.62	The Maze	14.12.66+
		The Long Long Day	22.03.67+
THE MAN FROM INTERPOL - Daringer			
Writer:		ADAM ADAMANT LIVES! - Season Two: BBC	
Nest Of Vipers	26.02.63	Story: Written by Tony Williamson from a story by Brian Clemens.	
The Feathered Friend	05.03.63	A Slight Case Of Reincarnation	31.12.66
Multi-Murder	12.03.63		
The Key Witness	08.04.63		
The Trap	06.05.63	THE AVENGERS - Season Five: ABC	
The Murder Racket	20.05.63	Co-Producer - 16 episodes.	
The Dollmaker	27.05.63	Writer: based on a story by Alan Paillo.	
Out Of Thin Air	03.06.63	The Bird Who Knew Too Much	11.02.67+
The Man Who Sold Hope	10.06.63	Writer: based on a story by Anthony Marriott.	
Latest Fashions In Crime	17.06.63	The Living Dead	25.02.67+
Case Of Mistaken Identity	08.10.63	Writer:	
The Last Words	07.11.63	The Correct Way To Kill	11.03.67+
Love By Extortion	28.11.63	Epic	01.04.67+
Inside Job	05.12.63	The Superlative Seven	08.04.67+
The Art Of Murder	09.01.64	The Joker	29.04.67+
Killer With A Long Arm	17.02.64	Writer: with Roger Marshall, as Bryan Sherriff.	
Man Alone	15.05.64	A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Station	15.04.67+
MAN OF THE WORLD - ITC/ATV		THE AVENGERS - Season Six: ABC	
Writer:		Co-Producer - 8 episodes.	
In The Picture	08.06.63	Writer:	
		Murdersville	11.11.67+
THE AVENGERS - Season Three: ABC			
Writer:			
Brief For Murder	28.09.63+		
The Golden Fleece	07.12.63+		
Don't Look Behind You	14.12.63+		
Dressed To Kill	28.12.63+		
Build A Better Mousetrap	15.02.64+		
The Charmers	29.02.64+		
Writer: Uncredited rewrite.			
Lobster Quadrille	21.03.64+		
THE SENTIMENTAL AGENT - ITC/ATV			
Writer:			
A Very Desirable Plot	23.11.63		
G.S.S - ATV			
Script Editor - 13 episodes.			
Writer:			
Dr. Ayre	04.04.64		
Seven Sisters Of Wong	25.04.64		
THE PROTECTORS - ABC			
Writer: as Tony O'Grady			
The Deadly Chameleon	30.05.64		
RIVIERA POLICE - Associated Rediffusion			
Writer: with Jordan Lawrence.			
Who Can Catch A Falling Star?	02.08.65		
THE AVENGERS - Season Four: ABC			
Associate Producer and uncredited Story Editor - 26 episodes.			
Writer:			
The Town Of No Return	02.10.65+		
Death At Bargain Prices	23.10.65+		
A Touch Of Brimstone	19.02.66+		



A portrait of Stuart Damon who stars as Craig Stirling in THE CHAMPIONS

THE CHAMPIONS - ITC/Filmakers		Writer:	A Coffin For The Bride	01.06.74
Writer:			I'm The Girl He Wants To Kill	08.06.74
Happening	23.10.68#		Death To Sister Mary	15.06.74
Autokill	30.04.69#		Come Out, Come Out, Wherever You Are	29.06.74
THE AVENGERS - Season Seven: ABC/Thames		Writer: with Luanhyla Greer	In The Steps Of A Dead Man	22.06.74
Co-Producer - 33 episodes.		THRILLER - Season Four: ATV		
Writer:		Creator, Executive Producer - 6 episodes.		
The Forget-Me-Knot	25.09.68#	Writer:	Screamer	04.01.75
They Keep Killing Steed	18.12.68#		Nurse Will Make It Better	11.01.75
The Morning After	29.01.69#		Night Is The Time For Killing	18.01.75
Requiem	16.04.69#		Killer With Two Faces	25.01.75
Pandora	30.04.69#		A Killer In Every Corner	01.02.75
Blasphemy	21.05.69#		Where The Action Is	08.02.75
Writer: with uncredited Dennis Spooner		THRILLER - Season Five: ATV		
Split!	23.10.68#	Creator, Executive Producer - 7 episodes.		
Writer: with Richard Harris		Writer:	If It's A Man - Hang Up!	12.04.75
The Interrogators	01.01.69#		The Double Kill	19.04.75
Writer: uncredited extra sequences			Good Salary - Prospects - Free Coffin	10.05.75
Have Guns - Will Haggle	11.12.68#		Murder Motel	24.05.75
Homicide And Old Lace	26.03.69#		Story: written by Dennis Spooner based on a story by Brian Clemens.	
THE PERSUADERS! - ITC/Telstar			Won't Write Home Mom - I'm Dead	26.04.75
Writer:			Story: written by Terence Feely based on a story by Brian Clemens.	
Overture	17.09.71#		The Next Voice You See	17.05.75
The Old, The New And The Deadly	12.11.71#		QUILLER - BBC	
That's Me Over There	03.12.71#		Writer:	
THE PROTECTORS - Season One: ITC/Group Three			Any Last Requests	12.09.75
Writer:			The Thin Red Line	24.10.75
Disappearing Trick	20.10.72#		Thundersky	21.11.75
Thinkback	24.11.72#		THRILLER - Season Six: ATV	
Vocal	16.02.73#		Creator, Executive Producer - 7 episodes.	
Chase	02.03.73#		Writer:	
THE ADVENTURER - ITC/Scotex			Sleepwalker	10.04.76
Writer:			The Next Victim	17.04.76
Action!	29.12.72#		Nightmares For A Nightingale	24.04.76
THRILLER - Season One: ATV			Dial A Deadly Number	01.05.76
Creator, Executive Producer - 10 episodes.			Kill Two Birds	08.05.76
Writer:			A Midsummer Nightmare	15.05.76
Lady Killer	14.04.73		Death In Deep Water	22.05.76
Possession	21.04.73		THE EXPERT - Season Four: BBC	
Someone At The Top Of The Stairs	28.04.73		Writer:	
A Echo Of Teresa	05.05.73		Fall Safe	12.10.76
The Colour Of Blood	12.05.73		THE NEW AVENGERS - Season One: Avengers Film & TV	
Murder In Mind	19.05.73		Enterprises	
A Place To Die	26.05.73		Co-Producer - 13 episodes	
File It Under Fear	02.06.73		Writer:	
Story: written by Terence Feely from a story by Brian Clemens			The Eagle's Nest	22.10.76<
The Eyes Have It	09.06.73		House Of Cards	29.10.76<
Spell Of Evil	16.06.73		The Last Of The Cybernauts...??	05.11.76<
THE PROTECTORS - Season Two: ITC/Group Three			The Midas Touch	12.11.76<
Writer:			The Tale Of The Big Why	10.12.76<
Goodbye George	02.11.73#		Dirtrier By The Dozen	09.03.77<
Decay	07.12.73#		Sleeper	16.03.77<
THRILLER - Season Two: ATV			Writer: with Dennis Spooner.	
Creator, Executive Producer - 6 episodes.			Faces	17.12.76<
Writer:			Three Handed Game	30.03.77<
Once The Killing Starts	02.02.74		THE NEW AVENGERS/THE NEW AVENGERS IN	
One Deadly Owner	16.02.74		CANADA - Season Two: Avengers Film & TV Enterprises	
Story: written by Terence Feely from a story by Brian Clemens			Co-Producer - 13 episodes	
Kiss Me And Die	09.02.74		Writer:	
Ring Once For Death	23.02.74		Dead Men Are Dangerous	09.09.77<
Sins It Death	09.03.74		Obsession	07.10.77<
Writer: with Terry Nation				
K Is For Killing	02.03.74			
THRILLER - Season Three: ATV				
Creator, Executive Producer - 5 episodes.				

Trap	14.10.77<	Blackout	19.10.80
Hostage	21.10.77<	Mixed Doubles	07.12.80
K Is For Kill - Pt1 The Tiger Awakes	28.10.77<	Writer: Original story by Chris Menaul	
K Is For Kill - Pt2 Tiger By The Tail	04.11.77<	Need To Know	05.10.80
The Gladiators	25.11.77<		
Writer, with Terence Feely			
Angels Of Death	16.09.77<		
THE PROFESSIONALS - Season One: Avengers Mark 1			
Productions/LWT			
Creator, Co-Executive Producer - 13 episodes			
Writer:			
The Female Factor	06.01.78>		
Old Dog With New Tricks	13.01.78>		
Killer With A Long Arm	20.01.78>		
Where The Jungle Ends	03.02.78>		
Close Quarters	10.02.78>		
Everest Was Also Conquered	17.02.78>		
When The Heat Cooks Off	24.02.78>		
Look After Annie	17.03.78>		
Writer: based on a story by Simon Masters			
Klansman	No UK TX		
THE PROFESSIONALS - Season Two: Avengers Mark 1			
Productions/LWT			
Creator, Co-Executive Producer - 10 episodes			
Writer:			
The Rack	14.10.78		
In The Public Interest	04.11.78		
THE PROFESSIONALS - Season Three: Avengers Mark 1			
Productions/LWT			
Creator, Co-Executive Producer - 8 episodes 1979-80			
THE PROFESSIONALS - Season Four: Avengers Mark 1			
Productions/LWT			
Creator, Co-Executive Producer - 15 episodes			
Writer:			
Involvement	29.09.80		
THE PROFESSIONALS - Season Five: Avengers Mark 1			
Productions/LWT			
Creator, Co-Executive Producer - 11 episodes			
Writer:			
Foxhole On The Roof	07.11.82		
The Untouchables	16.01.83		
BERGERAC - Season Three: BBC			
Writer:			
Ninety Per Cent Proof	24.12.83		
HAMMER HOUSE OF MYSTERY AND SUSPENSE			
- Hammer/Twentieth Century Fox			
Writer:			
Mark Of The Devil	05.09.84x		
The Sweet Scent Of Death	04.04.86x		
THE SECRET SERVANT - BBC			
Adaptor:			
Part 1	24.11.84		
Part 2	01.12.84		
Part 3	08.12.84		
WORLDS BEYOND - George Walker/pKp			
Writer:			
Voice From The Gallows	10.10.86<		
Serenade For Dead Lovers	16.01.87<		
The Eye Of Yemanjá	28.06.87<		
Regional dates			
Broadcast details are as Granada, unless:			
ABC +, ATV Midlands #, Thames §, Yorkshire <, HTV x.			

The stars of **THE NEW AVENGERS** pose for a photo whilst filming **Sleeper**



DOOMWATCH

BEYOND DOOMWATCH

by Jean Riddler

"The world has always had to face disasters of one kind or another, from volcanoes to tidal waves. From the Black Death to the night the Titanic hit the iceberg."

"In the 1970s, however, it is not the natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes that we are concerned about; the most terrifying disaster of their future will come from man himself."

This is no selling prose for **DOOMWATCH**, but for its never born descendant, **WORLDFORCE 5** and the Disaster Squad team.

Gerry Davis and Kit Pedler had combined their writing talent and scientific knowledge in a phenomenally successful way to create **DOOMWATCH**, but despite unused stories being ready for scripting, a fourth season was not forthcoming. The pair had drifted away from **DOOMWATCH** after disagreements with Terence Dudley during the second season, and had already begun formulating ideas for the next logical phase. What would happen if the **Doomwatch** team failed in stopping the disaster, or it was an area out of their realm? Who goes in to clear up the mess afterwards? Who attempts to minimize the environmental and

human cost? Answer: the Disaster Squad. The series never developed beyond the original document **DISASTER SQUAD** by Kit Pedler and Gerry Davis, although the title of the proposal was later altered by hand to **WORLDFORCE 5**.

Arnold Kramer is an astute businessman and political animal. From his early twenties, he spent fifteen intensive years of wheeling and dealing, intrigue, politics and non-stop hard work to become a millionaire. Then he sat back to let the money come rolling in, and it did. His life seemed ideal and complete. Happily married, a pretty daughter and rich. That is until his daughter is poisoned from mercury effluent whilst swimming in the sea off the New Jersey coast, and dies.

Kramer spends thousands of dollars to try and trace the source of the pollution. The final discovery is almost too much, as the effluent was discharged from one of his own subsidiary factories. His marriage breaks down and so does he.

Whilst Kramer's life is falling apart, John Whale, a scientific genius and idealist, is working on a computer to beat all computers. Whale is unorthodox in his manner, unacademic in his approach and untidy in his appearance. He is the one thing that the unattracted Kramer needs. Kramer offers Whale a home for his computer and, financed by Kramer's immense fortune, they set to work.

Members of the original **DOOMWATCH** team: John Ridge (Simon Doria), Barbara Mason (Vivian Sheward), Colin Bradley (Joby Blunshard) and their Head of Department, physicist, Doctor Spencer Quist (John Paul)





WORLDFORCE 5 seems ideal (scenario for a character like Pidge (Simon Chiles) but would dedicated scientist Fay Chantry (Jean Trend) fit in as easily?

After five years of around-the-clock shift work, aided by a dedicated team of scientists, they have programmed the computer with every conceivable disaster situation and effective ways of dealing with each crisis. The problem is what to do with this knowledge. The solution lies in the hands of the third member of the team, Nils Madsen, the Danish Secretary-General of the United Nations and friend of Arnold Kramer. Madsen is respected and feared by all the nations, East and West, from Russia to Afro-Asia. He derives his authority from this knife-edge position as the one thing that all the nations fear is Madsen's resignation. If he goes, then it would be practically impossible to find a replacement acceptable to all sides.

The series would open a year from this point. Worldforce 5 are now known internationally, operating from a lake-side chalet in Geneva, although Kramer also retains an office at the United Nations building in New York. Their work is appreciated by some and, naturally, of great interest to the world press, who ask some embarrassing questions of Kramer's group are not called in as emergencies. But like any good idea, it has its adversaries and enemies from international big businesses to political leaders, for Kramer does not really care whose toes he treads on.

In many cases the action of the Disaster Squad has had to be completely ruthless and objective, for example one of the plot outlines in the original series proposal reads:

"When a passenger train in France crashed and caught fire on a high viaduct, the group found that the imminent explosion threatened an entire village at the level of the viaduct. They immediately dynamited the viaduct and the train blew up in the valley below, killing the trapped train crew, but saving the village."

Another incident listed is a fire in a mercury factory (with a note to the effect that Kit Pedler would supply the technical details), and the fact that the computer can come up with nine ways to handle the situation in nine seconds.

Local based scientists and supporters inform the main team of imminent disaster and if there is time they will go through the official channels. However, Kramer will not think twice about the use of kidnapping, assassination and blackmail as viable weapons in their fight against entrenched villainy and stupidity. Part of this enables funds for Kramer's team to be collected, since Kramer asks the governments he assists for large donations. If a disaster will not occur again, he will keep the incident a secret - for a price.

"Sometimes they win. Sometimes they lose. Their battlefield is the last great frontier of our times ... the issue at stake nothing less than our survival."

Four episodes of the original DOOMWATCH series are currently available on two BBC videos: *The Plastic Eaters/Tomorrow, The Rat* (BBCV 4477) and *The Red Sky/You Killed Toby Wren* (BBCV 4478).

THE A-Z OF BRITISH TELEVISION THEMES COMPETITION

This September will see the release of a compact disc called *THE A-Z OF BRITISH TELEVISION THEMES* (PLAY 004) by Play It Again, a company that has already released three CDs featuring the music of John Barry.

The CD consists of tracks taken from the old PYE Records catalogue and include mostly original versions of themes from television series such as: *THE AVENGERS*, *CAPTAIN SCARLET AND THE MYSTERONS*, *CATWHALE*, *THE CHAMPIONS*, *DANGER MAN*, *DEPARTMENT S*, *DOCTOR WHO*, *FIREBALL XL5*, *MAN IN A SUITCASE*, *THE SAINT*, *STINGRAY*, *THUNDERBIRDS*, *Z CARS* as well as seventeen others.

The nice people at Play It Again have offered two copies of the CD as prizes in an excellently simple music quiz. All you have to do to take part in the competition is send your answers to the three questions below to the *TIME SCREEN* editorial address together with your name and address before November 1st 1992. The names of all those who have answered all three question correctly will be placed in the *TIME SCREEN* hat from which two winners will be drawn.

- 1) Who sang the vocal theme to *STINGRAY*?
- 2) Who composed the Jazz theme that opened the first three seasons of *THE AVENGERS*?
- 3) Who sang the vocal theme to *FIREBALL XL5*?

Good luck!

For those who want to cheat that fickle mistress fate the CD will retail at a price of up to £13.49 in some stores but it will be available to *TIME SCREEN* readers at a discount price of £10.00 plus 70p postage and packing.

To order your copy write directly to:

Screenthemes (Dept TS),
22 Kensington Close,
Toton,
Bristol,
Nottingham NG9 6GR.

Please make all cheques and postal orders payable to:

SCREENTHEMES

WHO'S SEVEN

Who's Seven is a BLAKE'S 7/DOCTOR WHO convention to be held on 30th October to 1st November 1992 at the Telford Must House Hotel, Shropshire, England. Confirmed guests include Gareth Thomas, Jacqueline Pearce, Colin Baker, Peter Tuddenham and Sheriagh Wells so far! Events include panels, Gambit Banquet, work-shops, art show, fancy dress, competitions, dealers room, filk etc. Plus the *Trial of Kerr Avon*.

Registration £25.00 weekend, £30.00 two day, £15.00 one day, age 4 to 16 half-price, under 4s free. For details send SAE to:

Henry Eggleton,
"Valhalla",
137 High Street,
Plaistow Broadway,
London E13 9HH.

GOING FOR A SONG

Thank you once again for another super issue of *TIME SCREEN* which as ever is packed with nostalgia and information about programmes past. The SUPERCAR and DOMINICK HIDE articles were particularly appreciated, as I have vivid memories of both. I was hoping perhaps for the lyrics to the song in the first Dominick Hide play ('Are There Somewhere Islands...') etc.) as this left me with pleasant images conjured up by the story. Maybe, as with your previous excellent lyrics featured on ACE OF WANDS, this could be a future item.

On more general things, I always enjoy your editorial as it gives a human 'face' to the magazine. I was gladdened, like most SF, TV fans I'm sure, that *The Tomb Of The Cybermen* has been found (exhumed?)

My main quibble with modern or current fantasy produced in this country is that it's often too 'subtle' or sophisticated to go for fully-fledged fantasy, preferring to suggest a fantasy/supernatural setting but not exploit the potential of it. As such MOON AND SON is a prime example. As much as I enjoyed its quirky cross-channel flavour, I'd have to say in the end it wasn't fantasy, as despite the basic premise of clairvoyancy, most of the stories seemed to boil down to conventional detective yarns, with the central premise (were Gladys' powers real or fake?) never truly addressed. Similarly THE CLONING OF JOANNA MAY used cloning as a device to hook a battle-of-the-sexes plot on, rather than explore more wider issues - give me TIMESLIP any day. SO HAUNT ME was okay, if only for a brief cameo by David Graham. Sorry, but I found ARCHER'S GOON almost unwatchable after the first episode: everyone screaming at each other and running around in a frantic frenzy. Only the final episode, where things were thankfully explained, was mildly interesting, but it was a long haul. I thought DARK SEASON was a bit better, again with a bravura finale. But, to show I'm not a total cynic, I continue to love RED DWARF, the fifth season proving for me the most complete, balancing humour and drama with the effects neatly, with the best set of episodes (apart from season four's Dimension Jump) to date.

Obviously for an old so and so like me, I'm becoming increasingly a 'nostalgia junkie', with odd programmes or clips on TV HEAVEN, TV'S GREATEST HITS and of course the

incomparable THUNDERBIRDS when, for thirty two weeks, I could be sit all over again... some say I still am. Anyway roll on STINGRAY.

HOWARD J HUTTON, Grimsby, South Humberdale

Just for you Howard here are the lyrics you requested:

YOU'D BETTER BELIEVE IT, BABE

by Rick Jones and David Pierce

*Are there somewhere islands,
Over the horizon?
Hidden by the morning mist,
Forever out of reach.
Are there somewhere islands,
Where the coconuts ripen?
Wild canaries in the palm,
A footprint on the beach.
Are there somewhere mountains,
Talked about in whispers?
Himalayas, mountains men
Have never dared to climb
Are there somewhere mountains,
Where the tiger dances?
Hillrides sweet with temple bells
As half as old as time*

*You'd better believe it babe
You'd better believe it babe
'Cause in this madness universe,
Well at least the dreams are cheap.
You'd better believe it babe
You'd better believe it babe
'Cause if you don't, it makes things worse,
And who wants a dreamless sleep?
Who wants a dreamless sleep?*

*Are there somewhere oceans
Rivers still run down to?
Oceans deep and briny blue
Where the China clippers soar.
Are there somewhere oceans
Boys still run away to?
Flying fishes jump for joy
And Roaring Forlurs roar.
Are there somewhere dreamers,
Drifting on the high road?
Are there there somewhere caravans
Approaching Samarkand?
Are there somewhere dragons,
Leprechauns and centaurs?
Unicorns, Camelot,
And Never-Never-Land?*

*You'd better believe it babe,
You'd better believe it babe,
'Cause in this madness universe,
Well at least the dreams are cheap.
You'd better believe it babe
You'd better believe it babe
'Cause if you don't, it makes things worse,
And who wants a dreamless sleep?
Who wants a dreamless sleep?*

Are there somewhere heroes,
Knights in shining armour?
Golden gallants come to life
From faded tapestries.
Are there somewhere ladies
Waiting in the moonlight?
Ladies elegant and sad
By weeping willow trees.
Look in children's faces
As they build their castles.
Castles made of sand to hold
The bold and restless sea.
Look beyond the mirror,
See the distant shadows.
But believe the dreams appear
As real as memories.

JET POWERED RADIO

I know it is somewhat outside your brief, but have you considered covering vintage fantasy radio in your magazine? I have become particularly interested in this medium since *JOURNEY INTO SPACE* blasted back on to the airwaves - it is utterly brilliant and I should love to learn more about it.

DAVID BRAWN, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire

Although we at *TIME SCREEN* are also great fans of Jet Morgan and his pole, radio series regrettably fall outside our brief. However, Andrew Pixley wrote an article and compiled an episode guide to the show which appeared in Issue 89 of *DREAM WATCH BULLETIN*.

ZIPPY

You requested readers' opinions as to whether *MOON & SON* was telefantasy. It must come down to whether you believe in Astrology and the various *New Age* acts that were used in the programme and if they can be used to solve crimes. If you believe in them it's not telefantasy, if you don't, then it is. However I would like to see *MOON & SON* covered, and other borderline telefantasy, because the more series that *TIME SCREEN* covers the better a reference work it is. It would be interesting to know if people consider *LAZARUS AND DINGWALL* to be telefantasy?

It was interesting that the Durol Blake interview should mention *RAINBOW*, which hasn't been the same since Rod, Jane and Freddie left. A programme which features a talking bear, a talking punk hippo and I believe an alien called Zippy is surely telefantasy. When can we expect an episode guide to the L200 or so episodes so far?

Can I make a suggestion for a possible occasional *TIME SCREEN* publication. The various archives, records, video listings that have been published are very useful but are out of date as soon as they are published. I'd like to see a sort of *TIME SCREEN YEARBOOK* which contains all these listings and which could be updated and published, say, every three years. New listings (ITV Archives?) could be added as and when they have been researched and it could also include a complete list of everything considered to be British telefantasy together with a reference to the issue which contains an episode guide. This could act as a very useful index.

Obviously this would be a bigger than normal publication so the price would have to go up accordingly but I think its usefulness would outweigh the increase. What do other readers think?

IAN BOLTON, Ilkeston, Derbyshire

We would be very grateful to our readers if they could keep us informed about any British Telefantasy they think we might have missed. We can't watch all four channels all the time and we often overlook programmes with telefantasy aspects. We hope to publish an article soon to bring the British Telefantasy Guide published in the Issue 162 Reprint up to date.

As for *RAINBOW*, early publicity for the series indicated that Zippy was in fact a snake (probably a species brought to near extinction by mankind who exploited it ruthlessly as the only natural source of zip-fasteners).

ACTION 93

Remember the adventurous classic television that was produced by ITC in the fifties, sixties and seventies? Do such shows as *THE SAINT*, *RANDALL AND HOPKIRK* (DECEASED), *THUNDERBIRDS*, *THE PRISONER* and *THE PERSUADERS* hold fond memories for you? Now members of The Saint Fan Club, Randall and Hopkirk (Deceased) Appreciation Society, Fanderson and Six Of One along with other fans have banded together to organise a weekend celebrating some of the programmes that ITC Entertainment Group have produced. A weekend that will be full of guest panels, interviews, programme screenings, merchandise dealers and lots, lots more!

ACTION 93 - A Weekend Celebration of ITC Entertainment, will be held at the Shepperton Moor House, Feltham Lane, Shepperton, Middlesex on the 26th to the 28th March 1993. For more details and/or a registration form send a stamped, self-addressed envelope (or 2 IRCs) to:

Claire Saunders,
12 Saville Crescent,
Ashford,
Middlesex TW15 1XK

TELEFANTASY?

I see from issue 18's editorial and some of the mentions in more recent issues that you now include *ARCHER'S GOON*, *DARK SEASON*, *THE CLONING OF JOANNA MAY*, *GROWING RICH*, *KAPPA TOO*, *NOT WITH A BANG*, *SO HAUNT ME* and *MERLIN OF THE CRYSTAL CAVE* as British telefantasy. You see to have missed a couple of recent things which may merit inclusion.

So how about *ANGELS* (1992 TV movie), *BERNARD AND THE GENIE* (1991 TV movie), *C.A.B.3* (1989 children's thriller, at the end of which three major characters turn out to be ghosts), *CHIMERA* (1991 serial), *FRANKENSTEIN'S BABY* (1990 play), *GRIM TALES* (1989, 1991 children's series), *I, LOVETT* (1989 sitcom pilot which was made by Norman Lovett after recovering from the heart attack that knocked him out of *RED DWARF* - a series of which is now in production), *JACKSON PLACE* (1990 children's serial, spoofing James Bond and Indiana Jones, but with a twist SF ending), *KINGDOM COME* (1990 play by Paul Cornell), *MULBERRY* (1992 sitcom series), *TIME RIDERS* (1991 children's serial), *THE WEEKENDERS* (the Vic Reeves pilot for Channel 4's *BUNCH OF FIVE* season - featuring four aliens in a shed), *THE WOMAN IN BLACK* (1989 TV movie).

DANIEL O'MAHONY, Fordingbridge, Hants.

We are to happy adopt most of the above as British Telefantasy except: *C.A.B.3*, *JACKSON PLACE*, *KINGDOM COME*, *MULBERRY* and *THE WEEKENDERS* because we no nothing about them and need more information, and *GRIM TALES* and *I LOVETT* because the fantasy is lost by the programme not taking itself seriously. If any reader's opinions on this topic would be welcome.

TIME SCREEN ERRATA

Number 18

- p16 para 5 This paragraph refers to Alan Gibson
p17 para 1&3 "DOPPELGÄNGER" should read "DOPPELGÄNGER"
p20 para 4 "SUPERCAR entered production in 1959" should read "SUPERCAR entered production in 1960"
p20 para 4 "floor puppetry" should read "floor puppetry"
p21 para 3 "Pilot to control" should read "Pilot to console"
p26 para 7 "led by and President" should read "led by President"
p29 para 4 "A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH" should read "MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH"
p30 para 2 "The Guilded Cage" should read "The Gilded Cage"
p34 para 2 "The Guilded Cage" should read "The Gilded Cage"
p35 para 3 "The Guilded Cage" should read "The Gilded Cage"
p32 para 8 "H.G. WELLS' THE INVISIBLE MAN" should read "H.G. WELLS' INVISIBLE MAN"
p33 para 6 "H.G. WELLS' THE INVISIBLE MAN" should read "H.G. WELLS' INVISIBLE MAN"

Subscriptions

The next issue of *TIME SCREEN* to be published will be the reprint of Issue 7 which should be out towards the end of the year. This will be followed by Issue 20 and Issue 21.

Subscriptions are available for these issues at £2.95 each.

Back Issues

Here is a list of our current back issue catalogue; our stocks are finite, so do not assume we will have all these issues in stock in six months time. If you require a full current listing please send an a/c to the address below. The series in *italics* have an episode guide in that issue.

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ISSUE 18 *THE CHAMPIONS*, *SUPERCAR*, *THE FLIPSIDE OF DOMINICK HIDE* interviews with *FLIPSIDE...* writer Jeremy Paul, director Darrol Blake and Sylvia Anderson £2.95

(Series in *italics* have episode guides.)

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This new paperback novel has been specially imported from the United States to satisfy the demands of fans of *THE AVENGERS* in this country. The novel features John Steed and Tara King as they join forces with many of Steed's old assistants to battle against evil scientists and the dreaded Cyborgs. £7.60

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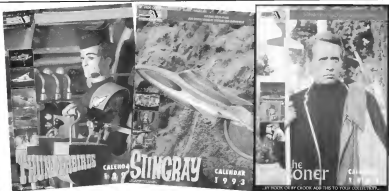
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